

cinema canada

Special: Toronto's 16mm producers

49-50

\$2.50



Nielson-Ferns and the Newcomers

Kaczender on "In Praise"

Reviews on Spry, Thomas, Kaczender, Collinson et al

CANADA'S BEST!

That's saying a lot, but to film makers it automatically means . . . Bellevue Pathé. It just goes to show that good news really does travel fast in an industry where you have to produce — or else.

And that's a cue to quality, because that's the one imperative we demand of ourselves. We set higher standards for ourselves than even the most discriminating client. We have the technical skills in our people and we have the technical facilities in our equipment. Put them both together and the results make friends out of clients. And that's a cue to quality, too, like: Productions Mutuelles - Cinévidéo - Vidéofilms - N.F.B. - Cinepix - Paramount - 20th Century Fox - Columbia - CBC - Warner Bros. - United Artists - MCA - Universal - Agora Films - Les Productions Cinak.

Our circle of friends and clients continues to grow.

A few of our recent original productions are:

Angela
Rimbaud est Mort
Panique
Les Maléfices -
Cathy's Curse

In Praise of Older Women
Blackout
Jacob Two Two
The Uncanny

Rituals
L'Ange et la Femme
Two Solitudes
Kings and Desparate Men

Recent dubbing of features:

Eric
Les Mensonges que mon
Père me Contait
Massacre à la Scie
Ils étaient Cinq

Le Chien Enragé
Duddy Kravitz
L'Autre Versant de la
Montagne

Lancer, frappé
Brrr
Visage de la Peur
Ces Adorables Victoriennes
A bout de Nerf

CANADA'S LARGEST FILM LABORATORY AND SOUND FILM ORGANIZATION



BELLEVUE *Pathé*

*A DIVISION OF ASTRAL BELLEVUE PATHÉ LTD./LTEE

MONTREAL
2000 Northcliff Ave.
Montreal, Quebec
H4A 3K5
Tel: (514) 484-1186

TORONTO
720 King St. West
Toronto, Ontario
M5V 2T3
Tel: (416) 364-3894

Pathé Sound Studios
121 St. Patrick St.
Toronto, Ontario
M5T 1V3
Tel: (416) 598-2521

Editor/Publisher: Jean-Pierre and Connie Tadros. **Toronto Advisory Board:** Clive Denton, Robert Fothergill, Peter Harcourt. **Assistants to the Editor:** Del Mehes (Toronto) and Charlotte Hussey (Montreal). **Subscription Manager:** Sylvie Galipeault. **Art Direction:** Louis Charpentier. **Advertising Manager:** Daniel Eng. **Typesetter:** Gail Reiter. **Correspondents:** Gray Kyles (Vancouver), Lorne Daniel (Edmonton), Lee Rolfe (Winnipeg).

Cinema Canada, founded by the Canadian Society of Cinematographers, is published by the Cinema Canada Magazine Foundation. President: Jean-Pierre Tadros, Vice-President: George Csaba Koller, Secretary-Treasurer: Connie Tadros, Directors: Agi Ibranyi-Kiss and George Campbell Miller. **Editorial information:** All manuscripts, drawings and photographs submitted must be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. While the editors will take all reasonable care, they will not be held responsible for the loss of any such submissions. Opinions expressed within the magazine are those of the author and not necessarily those of the editors. Cinema Canada is indexed in the **Film Literature Index** (Albany) and **International Index to Film Periodicals**. Member of the Canadian Periodical Publishers' Association. No part of this magazine may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic or mechanical, including photo-copying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the Publisher. Cinema Canada Magazine Foundation is a non-profit organization: Canadian Charitable Organization no. 044-1998-2213. Published with the financial assistance of the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council and the City of Toronto. Second class mail registration no. 3081.

Subscription rates for ten issues yearly: normal \$10.00, institutions \$15.00, foreign \$12.00. Notice of **change of address** should include your old address as printed on a recent issue. For subscriptions write to Box 398, Station Outremont, Montreal H2V 4N3, P.Q. Subscriptions are not refundable. Requests for replacement of missing issues will be honored for three months after the due date of the issue.

67 Portland St.
Toronto, Ont. M5V 2M9
(416) 366-0355

Box 398, Outremont Station,
Montreal H2V 4N3
(514) 272-5354

Cover:		The Raven from the opening film of the Newcomer series, produced by Nielson-Ferns (see p.51).
	4	Introducing...
	4	Douglas Leopold
	8	Vincent Vaitiekunas
Lois Siegel	10	Stunt Family: the Fourniers
Sheila Patterson	14	A Low, Low Budget
Martha J. Jones	17	Cronenberg on Wheels
Jane Dick	20	Breaking the Hiatus: George Kaczender
Gene Walz	25	The Best of the NFB
Paul Socken	26	"Mon Oncle" revisited
Doug Herrick	28	The Canadian Connection: John Grierson
Florence Jacobowitz	34	On the Road to a National Cinema
Peter Rist	38	In a Pessimistic Mood
	42	Special Section: Some 16mm Filmmakers from Toronto
Patricia Thompson	43	30 and Going Strong: The CFTA
Jaan Pill	44	Precarious Establishment
Patricia Thompson	48	Up and Coming
Paul Kelman	51	The Independant: A Real Alternative to CBC
Gray Kyles	56	To Market, To Market
George Csaba Koller	58	Street People: Holly Dale and Janice Cole
Paul Vitols	60	Ready to Go Professional
	65	Bookshelf by George L. George
	66	Tech News by Rodger J. Ross Distorsion in Motion Pictures
	68	Film Reviews.
	68	In Praise of Older Women: John Hofsess
	69	Drying Up the Streets: Doug Isaac
	72	Marie Anne: Bill Beard
	73	Tyler: Doug Isaac
	76	Tomorrow Never Comes: Lee Rolfe
	77	High Ballin': J. Paul Costabile
	79	Short Film Reviews

INTRODUCING...

douglas leopold

born to it

Monday afternoon, 3 p.m.

The scene is a spacious loft in Old Montreal. Queen Street, no pun intended. Classical music, paintings individually lit, pottery, a hammock strung between beams, clothes in open cupboards. Two telephones side by side on a pillow. The telephones never stop ringing. The bathroom is wall to wall photos, some of famous people, almost all include the occupant: Douglas Leopold.

The scene continues...

Enter Roger Hérroux of the City on Fire Hérroux. Douglas introduces him as "the cutest of the Hérroux brothers." Roger offers Douglas a handshake. Douglas complains, "Is that all I get?"

Later:

Douglas, "I just realized I have to be in Toronto, Montreal and Quebec City — all in three hours. I just keep saying Yes to everyone. I raised \$4000 myself this weekend by going on stage at Place Des Arts. Maybe I should raffle someone's jock strap from the Alouettes."

Douglas organizes publicity for feature films. In between he raises funds for Ballet Jazz. In between that he has about 200 other projects "happening."

"I'm a great cook," he explains as he offers a summer drink of Orzata (almond syrup), milk and soda water. He once worked in a "chic" French restaurant in order to earn money to travel.

"PR is a funny kind of career. You have to start very early. You're either born to it or forget it. I don't think it's the kind of thing that one can learn. You have to be very curious and get involved with any kind of project."

At McGill Douglas studied psychology, law and classical music.

"My first interest more than anything was culture. I felt that a law de-

Lois Siegel writes, photographs, teaches and makes experimental films in Montreal.



Douglas on the phone

gree would be helpful and suffered through a few years of that. I went to a lot of cases in court and realized that there was no justice in this world after all, and psychology I realized was perfectly useless — so I went to Harvard for a year and discovered that the outside world way beyond Canada was really very exciting."

Douglas wanted to travel. Summers were spent in the N.Y. and Cape Cod area. He kept meeting people in theatre, film and the arts. Paris was his first stop abroad. He became a teacher of English Literature and Economic History at a lycée.

"That changed my philosophy in life. I became very European and very French. I think everybody should go and live in Europe for a year. It brings you out of your Canadian context. I think that's really important if you are in the film industry. It's wrong to

only see what we're doing here. It also gave me fluent French. I speak 6 languages.

"My first job back in Montreal was Assistant Manager of the Montreal Symphony. And I just did everything. I raised money, sold tickets, arranged press conferences. I like putting interesting things together, and I take no risks — I'm very careful. I'm truly Canadian that way.

"But I know what sells, and I know what's going to attract. I have a strong feeling for the street: I want to know what people are doing. I run to New York — anywhere where there's a "scene" going on. I think it's important to remain in contact with what people are doing who are half your age: I'm 34."

Where Douglas has done PR: National Arts Center, McGill Faculty of Music, Saidye Bronfman Center, Place Bonaventure, Bell Telephone.

photo: Lois Siegel

AATON 7/CANADA'S CUP 78

For the fourteenth time in 84 years, one Canadian and one American boat have been selected to compete in the Canada Cup, emblematic of sailing supremacy on the Great Lakes.

Starting with the preliminary stages 18 months ago Canadian Director/Cinematographer Al Rubin has followed the story of the Canadian and American boats through design, construction, elimination trials and finally, the Canadian Cup series on Lake St. Clair. The resulting documentary is scheduled as a television sailing special.

"The filming of Canada's Cup '78 has been an extremely exciting project to say the least. "Right from the start of this eighteen month production it was agreed that all filming would be carried out on the basis of a "one man band." In addition, not to effect the design, construction, or racing of the yachts, all filmmaking could only be done as the event occurred... NO SET UP SHOTS... NO RE-TAKES..."

"A number of 16mm motion picture cameras were assembled. Some were modified, a few stripped down making them lightweight, compact, and easy to handle. All shooting was hand held and entirely in available light conditions."



"The Aaton was selected for on board sync sound as well as shooting from the camera boat.

"Within a short period of time, the camera became the backbone of the project. Its unique configuration allows for a natural fit with the shoulder making hand held shots extremely steady. The viewfinder moves into various angles allowing for shots within restricted space. Quick magazine changes... A plug-into-camera battery, eliminating power cord and heavy battery belt.

"In addition, the battery is very small and two spares can be carried in a pocket giving enough power to expose 6000' of film (however, you would need a camel to carry the 15 magazines."



The Aaton is ideally suited for exciting motion picture projects like Canada's Cup '78.

Aaton 7 — the light-weight studio/documentary camera. Features include quick-charge magazine and batteries, optional built-in videoviewing, recording capacity, super quiet 28dB or less.

 **Kingsway Film Equipment Ltd.**

821 Kipling Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M8Z 5G8. Phone: 416-233-1101.
Warehouses in Toronto and Vancouver. Service across the country.

Cinema Canada/5

"I think what people really want to know is not what happened, but what's happening... and how they can change their lives. I've proved that because I teach a course to 165 students at Dawson College. It's called 'Culture Vulture,' and I take them to art auctions, exhibitions, museums, plays and rehearsals and to New York, Asia, England and France.

"There's a lot of divorced, separated, retired and young people who want a change in their life style and who want to meet other interesting people but don't know where to go — I tell them what to read — what magazines to subscribe to and where to travel.

"After doing all these things — it's funny — you become just a known quantity, and so you don't go looking for the next part of your career. I fell into film. I fell into Robert Lantos and did *In Praise of Older Women*. I also do financing, and casting, besides publicity.

"A good publicist needs contacts — it's very important to work everywhere — as you know the Margaret Trudeau film (*Kings and Desperate Men*) made 780 front pages across America.

"Canadian film should not only be known about in Canada. The biggest problem is that we just don't think our product is good enough. Also they save the pages of "Time Magazine" for a big \$10 million American film so even though you have Karen Black, it doesn't guarantee you much more than say "The Hollywood Reporter," "Variety" and a mention in "The New York Times. And often the big name stars do not want it known that they are doing a small Canadian film.

"They save the biggies for the biggies. You're just another small movie somewhere out there — if you had 10 big names at least a \$5 million budget and a fabulous film — you might have half a chance.

"But then you have the other side of the coin where you have Altman and Paul Newman. They don't even hire a publicity person. Everybody knows in the industry — and just waits for it. They don't need publicity — they just release a few photos and the photos go around the world and onto the wire — and that's the end of it.

"Or you get a Super Star like Margaret Trudeau and then you can just have 50 journalists drop everything, and you call a press conference in three hours, and they're all there — like we had 200 journalists at a press conference — outrageous — really outrageous."

Future:

"I don't want to be an actor, and I don't want to be a producer. I don't want to get up at 5 a.m. and stand out in the cold.

"I'm for having better culture..I want to be known for turning more Canadians on to culture because I think there is really nothing that is superb and international except for The Ontario Art Gallery, The Montreal Opéra du Québec when we had it, and The Chinese Collection of The Royal Ontario Museum. There's very little else except for a dozen plays a year spread out across the country. We don't have any orchestra that comes near The Chicago or The London Symphony. We don't have any opera that comes near Salzburg or Vienna or La Scalla or Paris. We don't have any ballet that comes near The New York City Ballet or The American Ballet Theatre. So let's not kid ourselves.

"The same in film — I think we've only had half a dozen great films out of this country. Duddy Kravitz was a great film. I really honestly can't remember too many other great films, but I should say half a dozen or otherwise I'll get axed."

About the "Stars"....

"Canadians are so themselves that they don't get overwhelmed by working with big people, and the wonderful thing is they're very friendly and very 1st name basis — so you get these big stars coming to Canada — they're in your hands because without you they don't know where to go or what to do — you've got to get them their fur coats wholesale — you've got to take them to restaurants — you've got to make sure they're happy —

"Marilyn Keach wanted to go for 2nd hand clothes — Marissa Pavan wanted a fur coat — Karen Black wanted 20 pillows for her baby. Jean-Pierre Aumont wanted interesting evenings."

About people:

"Patrick McGoohan: an impossible man — he's got private problems.

Karen Black: unpredictable, very direct, like sexy direct, very Hollywood.

Stephen Lack: one of the strangest characters in this country.

"There are Hollywood type conversations between directors and producers that I find are very strange and not very Canadian — they're constantly promoting themselves in their own minds. So they better get very good

PR people who can do the job properly. There are only two people in film in this country who are good at PR. Prudence Emery and myself."

About PR:

"One of the strangest things I've ever done was to put 5 drag queens from "French Dressing" with Terry Evanshen from the Alouettes in a calèche in the Gray Cup Parade for Hai-Karate Cologne.

"Every client has a different problem *Kings and Desperate Men* had a Super Star — all I did was answer the phone — 300 times a day. They came to you and pleaded.

"Whereas with *Two Solitudes* everybody was down on the film because the PR had started very slowly, and people didn't think that the number was going to get off the ground — there had been a lot of personality conflicts — so I had to change the whole image of the film.

"With *In Praise of Older Women* Karen Black didn't want to give any interviews until after the movie was over, and then she only chose "The Globe and Mail" and "The Star". That was it — only two interviews in Canada, and you had a very aggressive Hungarian team that wanted to be in the papers every day."

Friends:

"I fit my friends in with my work. My friends help me on films — they stuff envelopes and type press releases. I bring them along to the press conferences and openings and drag them to the theatre every night. It could be worse. I think it's important to be amused as well as amusing."

A Typical Day in the Life of Douglas Leopold:

8:30: Phone starts ringing.

8:45: Listen to Thomas Schumacher Program (my partner) then talk to him on the phone. Do telephone calls.

11-4: Appointments

4-5: Swimming

5-7: Press conferences, openings or clients.

8: Performances every night: parties, ballet, Centaur, Symphony, Chinese Opera or movies.

11: Receptions or friends

1 a.m.: Dancing for 1/2 hour

2-8:30 a.m.: Sleep

"On and on and on for 15 years. If it gets any wilder, I'm going to get very old."

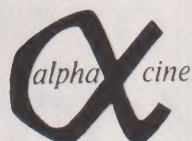
Lois Siegel

PROFESSIONALS
in all phases of special
photographic effects
film opticals of canada ltd.

410 adelaide st. w. toronto (416) 363-4987
vancouver (604) 687-4491
montreal (514) 937-2336

More than just an audio/visual house
More than just an animation house
Ms art services ltd. toronto m5v 8s1

410 adelaide st. w. 363-2621



**WESTERN CANADA'S
FULL SERVICE LAB.**

100% CANADIAN

- 35mm and 16mm Eastman Colour Negative and Positive, B. & W. Negative and Positive.
- 16mm Ektachrome ECO, EF and VNF., 35mm and 16mm C.R.I.
- ☆ Ultrasonic Cleaning
- ☆ Clean Air Benches
- ☆ Permafilm Treatment
- ☆ Reduction Printing
- ☆ Bell & Howell Colour Additive Printers.

— **DAILY / NIGHTLY SERVICE** —

- Twelve Channel 35mm and 16mm Rock & Roll mixing, daily transfers, interlock screening, RCA 35mm and 16mm optical tracks.

Alpha Cine
Service Ltd.

916 Davie Street • Vancouver, B.C. V6Z 1B8

Phone: (604) 688-7757 — Telex: 04-507757

**Autobiographical
Film
Symposium**

Saturday, November 4 — Sunday, November 5

Special Guests:

Maxi Cohen, Stan Brakhage, Jonas Mekas,
Ed Pincus, Amalie Rothschild, Kathleen Shannon,
Sandy Wilson, David Rimmer and Al Maysles

Screenings, panels, lunch

Registration Fee \$15 before October 25
\$20 same day*

**Mail to AUTOBIOGRAPHY*

Education Services
Art Gallery of Ontario
317 Dundas Street West
Toronto M5T 1G4

Art Gallery of Ontario

Dundas Street, two blocks west of University
Further information, phone 361-0414, ex.200

vincent vaitiekunas

putting his foot down

During the two years, 1973 and that Vincent Vaitiekunas taught filmmaking at Simon Fraser University near Vancouver, films made by his students won the McLaren Award for best film at the Canadian Student Film Festival in Montreal. Today, a high proportion of those students are full-fledged professional filmmakers in Vancouver, Edmonton, Toronto and elsewhere.

In 1974 Vaitiekunas moved back to Toronto and began teaching film at York University where he's now an associate professor in the film department. Again, several of his more recent students are starting to make their way into professional filmmaking.

Vaitiekunas is one of those rare characters who is both a recognized filmmaker, and a teacher with a real flair; and he draws from a varied background of experience.

He began his career by studying architecture and opera at the Baltic University in Hamburg, following an escape during the war from an SS forced labor camp in his native Lithuania, where he had been held as a member of an underground student resistance movement.

In the mid 1950's, after a move to England, Vaitiekunas became an actor and, under the stage name of Vincent Edward, appeared in several British feature films. He invariably played the role of a nasty villain. ('Or semi-nasty,' says Vaitiekunas.)

Not too many years later, and after another move, he attended the Ontario College of Art, which he left in his second year to join a design company for \$20. (twenty dollars) a week. At that time he also worked as a set and puppet designer with John Conway's *Uncle Chichimus*, a well-known name in early CBC television.

The next stop was two years at the Canadian Theatre School, where he met a number of fellow students including screenwriter and director Bill Fruet and novelist Donald Jack. While at the school he also met his wife, Mary. At that time an actress, Mary Vaitiekunas

has since made her mark as an artist/bannermaker. They have two children.

As a teacher, Vaitiekunas has a style that's decidedly unique. Even he can't figure it out. "Hell if I knew how it happened" was his reply when I asked him about it.

One feature of Vaitiekunas' teaching style is that he assumes without question that his students are fully capable of achieving the standards of energy, integrity and imaginativeness that distinguish a professional in any field.

photo: Nick Rotunda



Vaitiekunas on location

Another feature especially in evidence at the SFU Film Workshop, which at that time was an innovative non-credit program for students who weren't interested in grades or lectures, to his readiness, as he says, to "put my foot down," to ensure that students work at their films consistently, right

through post production, instead of procrastinating till the last minute.

Aikenhead, whose *Ivory Founts* won the McLaren Award for SFU in 1973, contributed to the sound recording.

In the same year Tim Sale, another of Vaitiekunas' students shared the honors for CFA's craft award for cinematography, for Phil Borsos' *Spartree*, which also won the CFA award for best theatrical short.

Among other notable Vaitiekunas students from SFU are Harlan Dorfman, a Vancouver TV newsfilm editor; Chris Windsor, whose *Trapper Dan* won the McLaren in 1974 and who later went to ACCESS TV in Edmonton; Danice MacLeod, who finished her epic film *Rawstock* after Vaitiekunas had gone to York; Rudy Wrench, directing for NFB in Toronto; and Mary Anne McEwen, a busy Vancouver filmmaker who remarks that 'everything I know I learned from Vincent.'

Vaitiekunas was delighted, but not surprised, when one of his former SFU students, Michael Chechik, won the 1977 Canadian Film Award for best documentary film under 60 minutes, for *Greenpeace: Voyages to Save the Whales*. *Greenpeace* was co-directed by Chechik and two other SFU alumni, Ron Precious and Fred Easton.

Some SFU Film Workshop students, such as Larry Keane, have gone on to further studies: in Keane's case to USC in California. James Orr, a graduate from York who studied production with Vaitiekunas in more recent times, has also gone on to further study at the American Film Institute in Beverly Hills.

All this points to Vaitiekunas' resourcefulness and innate versatility as both a film teacher who has inspired and guided many of his students on to their own successes and as an acclaimed filmmaker who has worked on over 100 theatrical, documentary and television films: as director, editor, writer, producer and actor.

Among his national and international film awards is the prize for best color cinematography at the 1970 Canadian Film Awards for *Multiplicity* (For Canadian Pacific, produced by Crawley Films Ltd.), a film which, be-

Jaan Pill is a free-lance writer and artist who lives in Toronto.

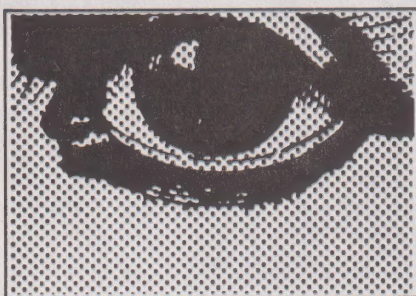
cause of its excellent color quality, was used for an entire year as a color standard by the BBC at the start of each day's television programming to enable viewers to adjust their sets. **Explore - Expo 67** (produced by Crawley for Alcan) won Vaitiekunas a diploma of merit at the Edinburgh Film Festival in 1968. **Motion**, another Expo Film (by Crawley for Canadian National) was released theatrically by Warner Brothers.

In 1969 his film **For Want of a Suitable Playhouse** (by Crawley for the Shaw Festival) won a silver medal award at the New York International Film and TV Festival. More recently, Vaitiekunas won a bronze at the same festival for **Fine Arts at York** which he directed, produced and edited for York University.

Earlier in his career he also directed two Film Board films, and his television experience includes several films for the CBC's **This Hour Has Seven Days**, including **Strike! Men Against Computers**, which he co-directed with Larry Zolf, winning the CBC's Special Wilderness Award for Screen Journalism in 1965. He had begun his production career as an assistant film editor at CBC.

During the coming year at York, Vaitiekunas will teach a course in directing and acting for film and television as well as 16mm production. He also has several film projects of his own in the works. When asked for details, he looked for a moment with that canny expression that his students well know, and said, "The film will speak for itself."

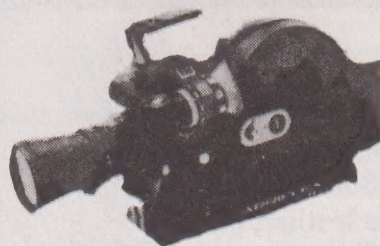
Jaan Pill



**The Canadian Filmmakers
Distribution Centre**

406 Jarvis Street
Toronto, Ontario
M4Y 2G6

MOVE UP TO ARRIFLEX

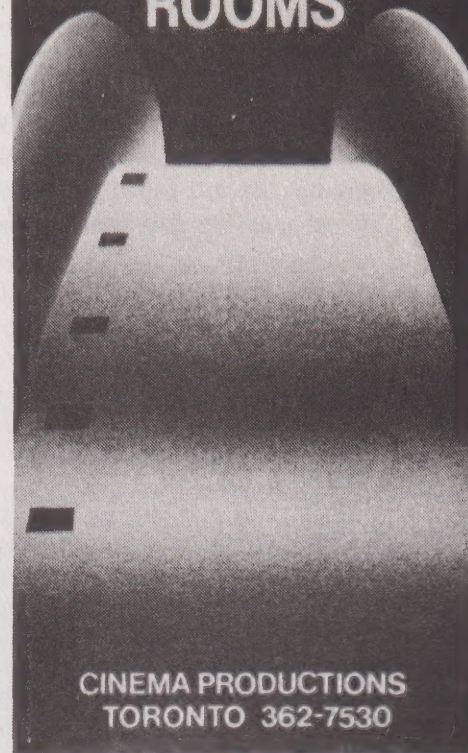


**Arri/Nagra Inc. is sole
Canadian Distributor for
Arriflex motion picture
cameras, Nagra sound re-
corders, and Multi Track
Magnetic recording
equipment.**

ARRI/NAGRA
INC.

6467 Northam Drive,
Mississauga, Ontario, L4V 1J2
Telephone: (416) 677-4033
Montreal: (514) 932-0326
Vancouver: (604) 738-4644

EDITING SERVICES ROOMS



**CINEMA PRODUCTIONS
TORONTO 362-7530**

A LOT CAN HAPPEN BEFORE YOU GET IT IN THE CAN

Play it smart and protect yourself in the professional manner with insurance

Let's discuss it

Arthur Winkler, CLU

Consolidated Insurance Agencies Ltd.

3101 Bathurst St., Suite 201, Toronto, Ontario M6A 2Y1
Telephone (416) 787-0304

MAKO FILMS LTD.

Canada's specialist in underwater cinematography and the producers of the following multi award winning films:

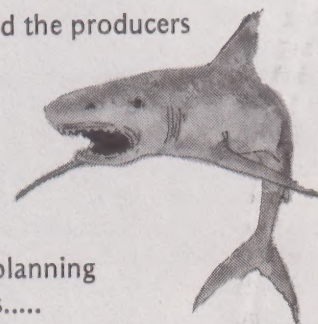
1976 "Wreck"

1977 "Where Shipwrecks Abound"

1978 "No..."

This then is the standard that we shoot to, not only with our own films, but yours as well. So if you are planning a shoot beneath the waves, call us, Canada's experts....

100 Richmond Street East, Suite 203, Toronto, Ontario M5C 1P1
Telephone: (416) 363-0471



stunt family

Lois Siegel took time out from a busy schedule to make a three minutes Canadian Vignette at the National Film Board called *Stunt Family*. Below, she introduces the leading players.

by Lois Siegel

In the beginning... Céline, Réal and Pierrette Fournier





Two generations of Fourniers.
Two passions: film and action.
Four brothers, 6 sisters, 8 children.
All stunt people for films.
125 features to their credit.

The family began their stunt careers about 12 years ago. At that time Gilles Carle was working on his film *Red* and was looking for demolished cars. Carle visited one of the Fournier's Saturday afternoon 'demolition derbys' in Longueuil, Quebec. Afterwards Carle asked Marcel Fournier, "How long have you guys been stunt men?"

"We said, 'What do you mean stunt men?' We didn't even know what stunt men meant. We thought it was somebody who was playing a joke. So Carle explained that in Hollywood they have people specially prepared to double up for actors in violent scenes, fights, car crashes... We never dreamed of being seen in a movie — even less of performing in one. Then Gilles Carle told us about his project *Red*."

"So we asked, 'How much do we have to pay you?' — we thought that we would have to pay for the chance. He said, 'No — you get money for that.' We found it surprising that someone would pay us for something we considered to be a pastime..."

"In the beginning we would flip a car over for \$50. We had no idea what a risk was worth. We were doing it mostly for kicks. On *Red* we worked 90 days and supplied 27 vehicles, including my own plane."

"After this first feature, word started to get around that there were some crazy guys in Longueuil doing some stunts for peanuts."

"Now it's up to the Union des Artistes to set the basic fees. This includes ordinary stuff like high speed chases, collision with no rolls at a certain speed limit. We get a basic fee of \$150 a day for fights with no high falls, being attacked by a knife, bottle or chair."

"Consultation is also \$150 a day because we might have to demonstrate how the actor has to perform a stunt."

"When we get into the more involved stunts — a chase with impact, a roll... we start to speak of \$300 for one shot. If we miss, it's free. The fee goes by risk. When you pass three stories for a fall, you're getting into high fees. We go to \$1000, for instance, when the landing material is not too thick."

Lois Siegel writes, photographs, teaches and makes experimental films in Montreal.

The Fourniers love performing stunts. When there is an old car around, it's difficult to distract them. They jump inside and aim for the nearest obstacle.

Marcel Fournier, being the oldest, is chief of the group. He emphasizes the value of working as a "family" because, as he explains, "People who are close to you are reliable, and 98 percent of the time you require assistance."

The Fourniers are proud of their work, and they insist on doing the best job possible. Marcel insists, "You're called to do a shot, and it has to be done the way the director wants it, that's what you're paid for. First the director will ask if the stunt is feasible. He explains, 'This is the effect we are looking for.' If you fall from 20' you don't fall zigzag, you fall straight. If the director wants you to make an 'S' — you say, 'no — we'll do the stunt, but we can't fall in an 'S.' Also, a shot has to look good. Film will only give you a flat picture. But there is depth — so we have to work a little bit on the film — so that the action shows."



Marcel Fournier is right at home, battering up cars

"With the director and cameraman we discuss what is going to happen — how well the vehicle or car reacts and what is the best vehicle to choose. The movie is there to show the action and then the damage. Sometimes it's good to tell a cameraman or director 'now when I hit, this is going to happen, and then this car will peel off and you will see the metal turning.. and if you are at just the proper spot, there's no danger for you, and you will see everything as it's happening.'"

"A stunt, whether it's tough or small, you can still be hurt. Just the same, my crew is instructed not to move before they hear the word 'cut.' I watch the director signal that the take is over. But if one person is caught in the car, it's not a matter of five seconds that will save him. If you're dead, you're dead. Five seconds more won't make you come alive. It sounds funny, but it's true. If you are squeezed — if you have an arm which is caught between the seat and the door because it's crushed in, there won't be much difference. The scene might as well be completed, and then we can move in."

"If we rush in too soon, and they have to shorten the scene, it might not show the proper punch — and the stunt is lost and then maybe you have to do it again."

"Even the production crew itself is told 'let us take care of the stunt' because if an explosion happens — why should the crew risk their necks — this is not their job."

photo: Gilles Carle



Three formidable members of the Fournier Stuntperson Team: Patrick, Céline and Yves

"We are always taking precautions and considering what would happen if something goes wrong. In addition we provide our own fire extinguishers. At least I can rely on my own equipment. I know if the extinguishers are full. We also always have chains, bars and a hammer to break the glass should we have to exit someone through a back window, and I always have someone with a knife to cut the seat belt if someone is squeezed."

"I'm not saying all this to prove that we do big dangerous items, but if they're not calculated well, they could become dangerous. I've got to make the stunt as spectacular as the director has described and walk out of it after the shot is completed."

The Fourniers prepare all their stunts in detail.

"Everything is rehearsed verbally or at least mentally before. When my family goes out there I want complete obedience. You do it like this and it will work.' Up to now it has worked. But you know that there is always the chance that if something changes during the action, you have to make your own decision."

The Fourniers seem to take injuries in stride. Accidents are part of their business.

"My sister Céline hit a horse and broke her spine in two places — and right after she was anxious to get back to doing stunts. But I wanted her to heal before she started again. There's no use to go limping on a shot when you're not able to do your best. We're not worried about physical injuries. If they happen — they will happen. You can be a normal person crossing the street and lose both your legs — and you're not even paid for that."

"We've got blood and bones, and we know one thing — they heal. This is the first quality of a good stunt man: you have to heal fast because you've got other jumps waiting..."

The weather often becomes a factor influencing the performance of a stunt.

"A slight change in temperature, like wetness, can effect a car crash. One day it's dry, the next it's wet. Now you've got two totally different conditions. With wet ground you have less control, less precision in your movements. Perhaps the next day the car doesn't perform the same: the tires are softer, worn out a little bit more. This is why when you're doing a stunt of importance you like to have a safety man with you."

"If I get 'knocked off,' the 2nd man is there to finish the stunt. Also the 2nd man is your second set of eyes. If I'm busy with a stunt, I concentrate on the action, but I might forget something which might make the difference between performing safely and getting hurt."

Marcel also emphasizes safety for the everyday automotive traveller.

"If something happens on the highway: a car crosses into your path and you know you are going to have an accident — you as a passenger should be prepared. If you have your seat belt on, if you know where to brace your hands, how to put your chin on your chest, and not to have the upper part of the body loose because you can be knocked-around, you have a better chance of surviving."

"The passenger in the back has the front seat as protection, but in a roll over, this passenger, if he is not bracing

Marcel Fournier as he went to war



himself, can receive a skull fracture. When you are unconscious you don't have control of your body and the worst can happen. Without a seat belt, the general public is putting its survival chances to zero."

Marcel always wears a seat belt.

"The law's not a joke — just to test that, get into a car and go 10 m.p.h. and hit a solid post. You will be surprised how far you are thrown: clear off your seat.

"The road is the worst race track there is in the world. This is where you get killed. You don't see guys getting killed every day on the race track or stunt men getting killed everyday as a result of a studied stunt. When I go on the highway, I am always careful. I'm always watching for the other guy. I drive prepared for the unexpected."

Each member of the Fournier family has his specialty. "When a scene is proposed to double for an actor, we choose the member of the family who resembles that person physically. But I also have to consider who is ready for the stunt. Sometimes I have to get one of my sisters to do a horse fall. One sister may be afraid of horses, but she thinks nothing of flipping a car. My wife likes physical stunts, such as falls. She's not worried to fall from a second story building."

The Fournier family grew up on the outskirts of Drummondville. Marcel's father was a garage owner. There was a race track next door and plenty of space. They raced every weekend. Marcel started to drive a car at age 5.

"My children... the minute they could hold a steering wheel, I let them drive... so now they're pretty good drivers — motorcycles, cars, trucks... anything they want to drive, I let them."

Marcel's oldest son, Yves, is 16. He wants to be an accountant.

"That doesn't mean he shouldn't know the art of mechanics, but I don't want his taste for stunts to get him to dislike his studies. Last year he made about \$1000 in the movies. At one point I realized that he thought this was an easy income... so I had to slow him down."

Although car stunts are the Fournier's specialty, they also stage fights, fire scenes, falls, horse stunts, explosives and other special effects. "We're trying to cover the whole field."

Sometimes a film will require that they work as actors: bodyguards or gangsters in scenes that require stunts which



Charles Fournier about to walk his bride down the aisle

would be too dangerous for an untrained actor. "Where the actor leaves off, we take it from there.

"There may be a week of shooting which goes with the stunt, and you have to memorize lines and be like the person you are portraying... if they want an ugly face like you, fine, you have to play the part. You have to feel like an ugly man."

As might be predicted, it is usually difficult to double a male actor with a female stunt woman.

"This created quite a hassle during one shoot. In Quebec, with the Canadian male ego — a woman replacing a man? There's no way. On one feature when the actor found out that my sister was going to double up for him, he went into a tantrum and wanted to quit — so finally we couldn't use her for that stunt — it was a question of pride. Since then, I don't try to put a girl in an actor's place if he is going to be present during the stunt."

Besides his immediate family, Marcel sometimes accepts other stunt men into the business.

"Students come to me with their little bit of specialty, and we develop the rest. But they have to be persistent enough and free enough. I have one insurance broker whose revenue is in the upper bracket, but he does stunts because he likes doing them. I use him as a cop for chase scenes.

"I get calls: 'I want to be a stunt man. How do I go about it?'

"I ask: 'How old are you? Do you do anything special? Are you good on a motorcycle? How about races?... just to see that the guy has a start in something before... otherwise you lose a lot of time... you see whether the guy has the guts for stunts — to say you are interested and to do a stunt are two different things.

"You get kids maybe 17-18 years old. They seem to be good material, but they don't have the experience. To see how the guy reacts, I get in the car with him. We drive off a ramp. I watch how he reacts. I see the nervousness or perhaps the guy will not make it over the ramp.

"We do stunts partly for the glory and money and for a taste of a different venture... we're not special physically... we're just like normal people."

fast companies (1)

a low, low budget

There was a time when making a Canadian feature meant getting together a lot of faith, hope, friends and spare cash, and doing it. This year, a group spent a reported \$23,000 to turn out *Fast Company*. (Not to be confused with another film by the same name.) Enthusiasm for these films has always run high...



Coming into the bank from left to right: Eli Allon, Clay Borris and Rolf Kempf



Clay Borris is gunned down outside the bank

Fast Company (a Faster Film production), now in post-production, promises to be a fast film. It is the story of three small time bank robbers who think they are on their way to the big time. It offers crooked deals shootouts, bank robberies and a love story all packed into 75 colorful minutes.

The shoot was not without its own excitement. One day, in a bank, the three leads, Rolf Kempf, Clay Borris, and Eli Allon were running through the beginning of the robbery. A real Toronto policeman walked in, gun drawn. The man was, understandably, nervous. What would you do if you were a cop and were told over your car radio that a bank robbery was in progress and you arrive and realise this is not the sort of bank heist you are familiar with? True, there are three masked men running around waving rifles and shouting, but something is not quite right. People are strolling about casually, standing around calmly and the bank tellers do not look particularly frightened. Plus, the bank is dotted with lights. To everyone's relief, he put his revolver away.

A *Globe and Mail* photographer came down because he had heard about the robbery. He stayed on to take pictures of the leads who proceeded to ham it up.

After the policeman left, the bank front was littered with signs and a crew member was posted outside. There were no more problems of this nature for the remainder of the day.

Another super-exciting bit occurred when Psycho, played by Allon, had to crash through the doors, run into the street brandishing his shot gun, money bags jingling. I worried until he returned safely. What if he had been apprehended by another uninformed policeman? In this situation, do the police shoot first and ask questions later?

Although they have not quite been plagued by the police, **Fast Company** has had its share of problems with them. Earlier in the shoot, the script called for Billy, played by Kempf, to be beaten up by two cops. The scene was shot down by the lakeshore at four in the morning. Peter Wronski, the director, was in their police car, Billy was being beaten and the camera was a fair distance away. Two policemen appeared on the scene. They were confused. They did not know if they had

stumbled onto an ordinary beating or if two fellow officers were actually involved in this altercation. Everything was, fortunately, straightened out to everyone's satisfaction.

In another scene during the bank robbery, Ray played by Borris, had to smash his way through a window in order to get into the bank manager's office. Borris was so intent on doing it properly, he badly slashed his hand. The scene was suitably dramatic.

The producers, Paul Eichgrun and Steve Klys, are neither flaunting nor hiding the fact that theirs is a Canadian film. According to Wronski and Eichgrun, **Outrageous** has paved the way for good commercial films and has proven that Canadian films can do well on the international market. For a film to be successful it is no longer necessary to pretend that it takes place in some anonymous American locale.

At this point, Wronski, Eichgrun and Klys are interested in making careers of putting out good, entertaining commercial films. They do not want to make art films or message films. They want to make films that they think people will truly enjoy. In the future they may change their minds and want to branch out.

For many of the people involved, **Fast Company** is a first. Wronski is 22 years-old and this is his debut as a feature director. Eichgrun and Klys have never written or produced a feature film. Kempf is a musician/songwriter who has never acted and has never had anything to do with films. Borris, a director for the last ten years, is appearing in front of the camera for the first time. Many of the extras are also relatively untried and are working on **Fast Company** out of interest or to expand into different fields.

Although Wronski and his cohorts are neophytes when it comes to feature films, they and the crew have solid experience under their belts. Wronski and Faster Films have done dramas and documentaries for the C.B.C. Eichgrun has worked with the N.F.B. and C.T.V. and on other productions in several capacities. Klys has worked on features and shorts for the N.F.B. and the C.B.C. Eichgrun says his people are "dynamite."

Fast Company is a non-union production. Filming is much simpler this way, not to mention cheaper. Producers can push dollys freely and direct, should the need arise. Grips can dress sets. Everyone can double and do whatever is necessary without worrying about rules and extra time-consuming problems. For a production on a tight budget, working in this manner makes a tremendous difference.

Everyone is optimistic about the future of **Fast Company**. Kempf is writing the score and there are plans afoot for a record tie-in. They would like to see the theme released as a single prior to the release of the film.

From all appearances, they were justified in their optimism. The rushes look good. Kempf and Borris work well together and have presence. With the exception of one or two bit parts which, in all likelihood, will be edited out or around, the performances are strong and well done. Joe Sutherland is a seasoned photographer and it shows. Kempf is an excellent musician. **Fast Company** looks like it will quickly paced, exciting and dramatic.

Sheila Paterson

Sheila Paterson is a free-lance writer who lives in Toronto.

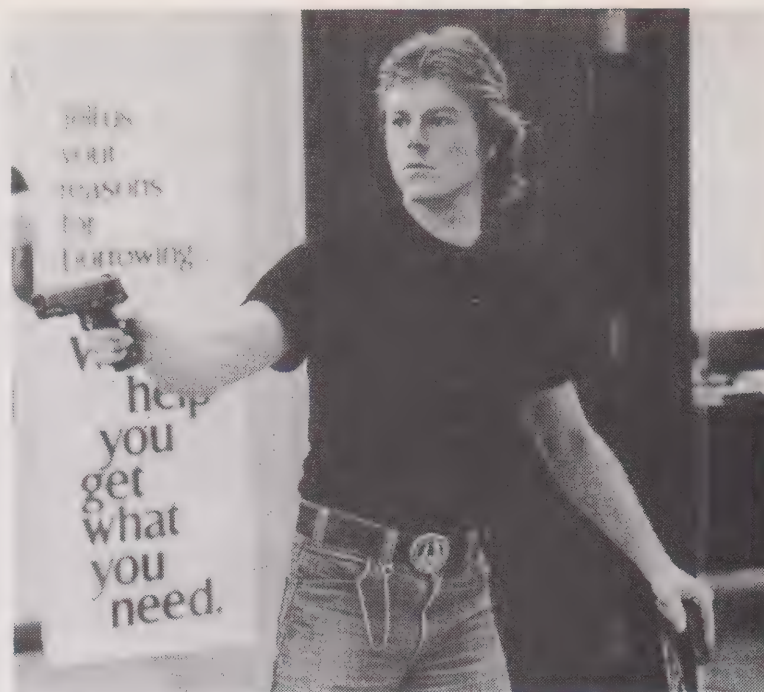


photo: John Phillips

Fast Company's leading actor, Rolf Kempf about to help himself

Fast Company is a story of people in jeopardy, a love story set among small time bank robbers aspiring to the big time. The producers, Paul Eichgrun/Steve Klys and director Peter Wronski are not interested at this time, in making an "artistic" film or a "message" film. We want **Fast Company** to be an entertaining, interesting, and at times touching film, free of cumbersome statements on the meaning of life.

The tight budgeted production had a shooting schedule of twenty-one days, with three six-day weeks, averaging just ten hours per day. "The cardinal rule of a tight budget film is pre-production planning of all phases of the production process, with equal attention paid to the pre-production and post-production phases, said Paul Eichgrun. "This involves careful consideration in the determination and selection of staff, cast, crew, equipment, supplies vendors and shooting sites."

"In doing pre-production homework, it is essential to weigh all decisions against the "time-cost factor." Time is money, and production time is more expensive than most single budget items. Save money where it counts... in production time."

Peter Wronski, in his feature directorial debut with **Fast Company** said, "We've tried to give the public entertainment. We decided at the beginning, during the concept stages, that general appeal would be a prime force in direction and goal."

All the shooting was done on location in Toronto. The director of Photography, Joe Sutherland, is a highly experienced technician, who after working entirely on documentaries has photographed his second feature within a year. "I feel we got what we set out to get" said Sutherland. "We wanted a big city feeling, fast living personified."

The film was shot in 16mm for blow-up to 35mm. A shooting ratio of 6:1 was budgeted for and ended up by exposing 64,000 ft. of color reversal 7542, for 75 minutes of finished film.

The cast is headed by Rolf Kempf and Clay Borris in principal roles with Liesja Wagner, Sandra Scoville, Eli Allon,

Wayne St. John and Gene David Paulson supporting. The casting was handled by Paul Eichgrun who auditioned and screen tested about one-hundred and twenty-five potential actors and actresses. Overall, close to three hundred applied to the casting call. "We decided to go non-ACTRA for budget reasons. The choice was between the allocation in the budget to talent costs or budgeting the sum into the action sequences. We chose the latter and I'm happy to say, without regrets," says Eichgrun.

"What we set out to get" says producer/writer, Steve Klys, "was a fast paced action feature shot in the smoothest way possible as a small budget would allow. A film that would have international appeal and marketability. As producers and writers Paul and I decided that **Fast Company** would be one Canadian feature that would not have that regional look as many Canadian films have. To avoid this we decided that **Fast Company** would not be a personal film, but a film that we feel the public wants to see. We got what we set out to get. The crew and cast were terrific, their spirit and energy made this film. That rare occasion of a crew working each day as a family.

The Producers

FAST COMPANY

d. Peter Wronski, sc. Paul Eichgrun, Steve Klys, ph. Joseph Sutherland, light. Ron Watts, ed. Bob Schreoder, cont. Yasmin Karim, sd. John Gundy, a.d. Tibor Takacs, m. Rolf Kempf, cost. Tania A. Mimmagh, l.p. Rolf Kempf, Clay Borris, Liesja Wagner, Sandra Scoville, Eli Allon, Wayne St. John, Gene David Paulson, p. Peter Wronski, Steve Klys, Paul Eichgrun, p. assit. Jeff Walderman, Jim Bradley, Mike Rea, p. manager. Kalli Paakspuu, p.c. Faster Films Production, 1978, col. 16mm. running time 75 minutes.

cronenberg on wheels

by Martha J. Jones

David Cronenberg has broken stride, taking time out for a racing film called *Fast Company* before moving back to horror with *The Brood*. Martha J. Jones reports on the Alberta shoot below, and talks with Cronenberg about his plans.

photo: Brian Meyer



An inflamingly dramatic dragster stunt from *Fast Company*

On the western outskirts of Edmonton, Alberta, skirted by a dusty, grassy field on one side and Highway 16 with its truck stops, gas stations, and mobile home lots on the other, stands a nondescript prairie motel called the Sandman. Outside, in the parking lot, like some great carnival sideshow, rests a huge semi-trailer emblazoned with stars, stripes, and the flashy logo, FastCo. It is built to accommodate a Double A top fuel dragster and a funny car, both equally flashy in their matching coats of red, white, and blue. These are authentic racers, and they are featured in the film, **Fast Company**, now being shot in Edmonton.

Inside the motel, it's a mixed crew of people. The non-union production company is divided about 50/50 between eastern and western Canadians, about half from Toronto, the other half from the major western population centres. Director David Cronenberg (**Rabid**, **Shivers**) is here; so are producers Peter O'Brian (whose latest feature, **Blood and Guts** has been nominated for a Canadian Film Award as best Canadian film), and Michael Lebowitz of M.L.I. Somewhere in the roughly thirty rooms that have been occupied since late June are Mark Irwin, D.O.P. nominated for top cinematography on **Blood and Guts**, and special effects man Tom Fisher of Los Angeles, who spent two years blowing up vehicles for *Rat Patrol*. The cast features veteran American actors William Smith, lately seen in **Blood and Guts**, and John Saxon, as well as Claudia Jennings, a third American, who was granted special permission by ACTRA to take the female lead. Canadians Nicholas Campbell, Judy Foster, and Don Francks take other major roles.

Drag racing is the theme of **Fast Company**, and drag racing is what brought the crew to this western location. It is the second most popular spectator sport here, next to football. Many of North America's top drag racers come from Alberta, and Edmonton boasts Canada's second largest drag strip, International Speedway. The action centres on the adventures of drag racer Lonnie "Lucky Man" Johnson as he travels the Pacific Northwest circuit between Canada and the States. Edmonton doubles for various American cities during the course of the film, but also "plays" itself, at which time subtle Canadianisms are introduced — nuances of speech, local brands of beer and so on.

Fast Company was originally the brainchild of two young Vancouver men, Courtenay Smith and Alan Ireen. The two had attended a drag race for the first time in years, and were simultaneously struck by the filming potential. Here was the stuff of box-office — action, color, danger, and more female fans than a Bay City Rollers rock concert. Ireen came up with a story line, but eventually withdrew from any further involvement with the film. Smith went on to put together a script and peddle it for months in Western Canada and Hollywood before he finally got financial backing from the CFDC and Quadrant Films. "I didn't have a clue what I was doing," he admits candidly. "I'd basically written a documentary on drag racing, with a plot just stuck on top to carry it along." Since then, it has been rewritten, dramatized, and generally beefed up until it bears little resemblance to his original. There is no resentment in his voice as he explains what it has gone through, and in fact he seems relieved that it

has fallen into the hands of more experienced writers. One of these is Phil Savath (Homemade TV), John Hunter (The Hard Part Begins) assisted unofficially, and of course director Cronenberg, accustomed to writing his own scripts, makes changes as he goes along. In the end, the script-writing credits will probably be shared by Savath, Cronenberg, and Smith.

David Cronenberg's attitude towards working with someone else's script is very open. "It's refreshing," he comments. "I never would have written a script about drag racing myself." But presented with it he found it a subject he could easily get into. This is not surprising, as an interest in fast machines comes to him naturally. He has raced cars, bikes, and go-carts just as a hobby, and himself owns a Ferrari and a Lancia. One of his early films was a half-hour item on motorcycles called **The Italian Machine**. "I didn't want David only for his reputation as a director, but because I know he knows cars, as well," explains Michael Lebowitz.

And it obviously is going to be a movie about cars. Posters of dragsters are scattered on the walls of the production office. The flashy racers are featured on all the publicity material, and the local Top 40 station exhorts racing fans to come down and serve as extras — with good results. One enthusiastic local even made off with the classier parts of a camera-ready vehicle — parts which he could have picked up for nothing after the dragster was blown apart in a stunt.

Top drag racers will actually be doing the driving in their own cars; this means sharp-eyed aficionados could potentially pick out their heroes whizzing by — people like Gordi Bonin, Terry Capp, Graham Light, and others known only to the initiated. Authenticity is one of the objectives of the production, and a close rapport has been built up between the film crew and the racing community in Edmonton. "We needed certain stunts for dramatic purposes," relates Lebowitz. "At first, if the drivers didn't think they were true-to-life, they were reluctant to do them. But once they'd think about it, they'd realize that they could actually happen that way, and they'd be happy to help us set them up."

People like Lebowitz, who have never previously attended a drag race, are becoming overnight experts on fuels, speeds, engines and drivers. Like everyone else, he comments on the noise: "When the supercharged engines start up, powered by massive blowers, it's an unearthly noise, unlike anything else. The ground moves; the sound is physically felt. The noise, the smell — it's the creation of an event, and it's just soul-shattering." Peter O'Brian voiced a similar response. "After this is over, I'll probably go back to the drags, maybe once a year. It's an experience."

But something about Cronenberg's approach, the sense of caring as he talks about the film, the conscientiousness of his direction, makes one feel that this might not be just another drive-in double feature in which the cars are the stars. To him, balance between man and machine is all-important. The seemingly most trivial scene can end up being shot over and over, with Cronenberg's voice a soft, constant flow as he almost hypnotically encourages the actors. Patience, earnestness, and gentleness are words that come to mind. When questioned about his meticulous attention to detail, Cronenberg sounded almost Zen-like in his philosophy. "It can be like a drag race... or a long-distance run, or a boxing match... anything that requires endurance and total involvement. You have to be focused on exactly what's going on at the moment. Just because it's three in the morning, you don't

Martha J. Jones is an Edmonton based writer and broadcaster. She is the Alberta correspondent for CinéMag.

let up your concentration... it'll show in the final work." As he speaks, softly intent on what he is saying, he is never distracted by other events in the room, and it is entirely credible that his concentration on the set is equally total.

The actors are important to him. He personally auditioned up to 50 potential candidates a day, seeking out the suitable. "Suitable" means someone who cares enough to get involved in the role. "Anyone can just read the lines and get through a scene fast. But someone who cares will tell me, 'This just doesn't feel right,' or 'I don't think this character would say that' and we can change it." Cronenberg finds the communal "feel" on the set to be important.

Fast Company is a complete thematic change from Cronenberg's two most recent successes, **Rabid** and **Shivers**, both

horror flicks, and both of which have received a certain amount of critical recognition; in fact, in Britain, it is not unusual to come across Cronenberg retrospectives, featuring such works as **Stereo** and **Crimes of the Future**. **Rabid** was so popular there that a paperback version was quickly put together to satisfy cult fans. In **Fast Company**, sure, someone does lose a hand in an engine fan and we get to see the fingers come flying off, but to Cronenberg, this is more of an action element than any vestige of his interest in horror.

Still, horror has a firm hold on his imagination. "It touches something basic in human nature," he quietly explains. "There's an attraction/repulsion syndrome... being frightened can be a cathartic experience. Maybe we face our own death in a controlled way." He cites the appeal of gruesome fairy tales like Hansel and Gretel, stories which have been frightening children for centuries. "And they love being scared," he laughs.

A good horror movie isn't easy to make, according to the young, self-taught director. It's pointless to just have a lot of gore and bodies being chopped up. He mentions **Night of the Living Dead** and **Texas Chain Saw Massacre** as two examples of horror that works. Yes, there's a lot of blood and gore in **Massacre**, he agrees, but there are such mysterious settings, such strange images — the moonlit fetishes of bone rattling in the breeze; the flurry of feathers in the deserted slaughterhouse — that the film is raised to a surrealistic level. His own plans for the future include a film he has written himself, **The Brood** which he hopes to commence in September of this year. And, it's a horror film — "but it's a special kind of horror, one I don't think has been seen before," he mysteriously promises, with no further hints.

As to other future plans, producer Lebowitz hopes to be collaborating on a comedy with Peter O'Brian sometime in November or December. After that, he envisions returning to Alberta in the spring to do a film portraying the confrontation of big money industry with the environment and native population of the province. Lebowitz found filming in Alberta a very positive experience, and went on record to say that this is a "spectacularly" good place to film: helpful people, cooperative government, and fine scenery. As for first-timer Smith, he hopes to use this venture in filming as a learning experience towards future productions of his own.

At the time of this writing, **Fast Company** is scheduled to complete shooting in Edmonton August 26th. Processing is to take place in Vancouver, and post-production in Toronto. If all goes as planned, the \$850,000 feature should be opening in Canada and the States in mid May '79, coinciding with the drag racing Nationals in Columbus, Ohio.

FAST COMPANY

d. David Cronenberg, sc. Phil Sabbath, ph. Mark Irwin, ed. Ron Sanders, sd. ed. Bryan Day, l.p. Bill Smith, Don Franks, Claudia Jennings, Nicholas Campbell, Judy Foster, Cedric Smith, Bob Haley, George Buza, David Graham, Don Granbery, Michael J. Reynolds, exec. p. David Perlmutter, assoc. p. Michael Lebowitz, Peter O'Brian, Courtney Smith, p. manager Caryl Brandt, p.c. Michael Lebowitz Inc. (1978), col. 35mm.

photo: Rich Porter



Fresh from the starring role in **Blood and Guts**, William Smith is now appearing in **Fast Company** as Lonnie "Lucky Man" Johnson

breaking through the hiatus

George Kaczender's first feature was Canada's entry in the Cannes Festival five years ago and *In Praise of Older Women* was chosen by the Canadian pre-selection committee this year as the 'best of the crop'. Jane Dick has a short look at his earlier films before talking with Kaczender about his latest one.

by Jane Dick



Berenger and Black discuss a difficult scene with Director Kaczender

"**In Praise of Older Women** is dedicated to women. The main character loves women, the author loves women, the director loves women..." (laughter)

There is a lot of hoopla surrounding George Kaczender's third and latest feature film **In Praise of Older Women**, based on Stephen Vizinczey's novel and due for release in the fall. Partially because it is an erotic film but also because it is the breaking through of a five year hiatus period (following the release of **U-Turn** in 1973) in which Kaczender made a few short documentaries, sweated over various scripts that never reached fruition due to lack of funds, aligned himself with RSL Productions of Montreal, and finally had his labors rewarded with that necessary portion of luck to get **In Praise** off the page and into the can.

It was a pretty straightforward shoot, as shoots go; the biggest problems encountered were in perfecting the script and raising money. Just the sort of problems one would expect to loom large and exactly the ones that have plagued Kaczender throughout his career. Let's face it — no matter who you are, writing a film script is no easy task, and as for raising money in this fair land — a picnic it's not.

Kaczender came to Montreal from Hungary via Italy, where he fled at the defeat of the Revolution. He arrived in 1957 and began work almost immediately at the NFB.

"I went there on a Monday and Tuesday I was working. The Film Board had just moved from Ottawa. They had a huge organization and they didn't have enough people. They were also looking for an editor. My English was rotten at that time... very bad. So I said, 'I'm a pretty good editor.' (laughter) I was always so arrogant about these things.... After a couple of weeks they hired me for good and I stuck out thirteen years there."

In addition to editing, he also directed several short films culminating in his first feature film **Don't Let the Angels Fall** in 1969. This was the first Canadian feature ever selected for competition at Cannes. It won critical praise but scarcely caught public attention. Not surprisingly. It is a well-made but too-sober film, passionate and loyal to a fault in its commitments, but with only the merest scraps of relief from its steady downhill climb.

"I was ruined by the NFB in a way... taking myself so goddam seriously and not considering humor as an absolutely major part of the dramatic art form. It doesn't matter how serious your subject is, you have to treat it with a sense of irony and humor; otherwise it's not worth doing. I wish I would have realized that before. Now I won't ever make a film that lacks those qualities."

After **Angels** George left the NFB and together with John Kemeny and Joe Koenig set up International Cinemedia Centre, Ltd. There he made educational shorts. In 1971, an artistic rift set George off on the independent trail. He formed George Kaczender Productions Ltd. and soon after made **U-Turn** which he produced and directed himself — a feat he swears he will never attempt again. 80 percent of his energy went into trying to make the film and 20 percent into actually making it. Nevertheless, **U-Turn** was an engaging film; its wit and style, among other things, marking a distinct and happy departure from **Angels**. No doubt, **In praise**, with its eroticism and whatnot will be a striking departure once again.

Kaczender wants to make films "like nobody else" and is also trying to say something about the human condition. While maintaining a distinctive and growing personal style, he is not interested in repeating formulas of filmic style and each of his films explores a different mode of expression.

Not yet having seen **In Praise**, a critical discussion of Kaczender's development seems fatuous. But his signature is apparent in his previous films. He has a well-developed social consciousness and places his characters in distinct social milieus. His characters are not happy where they are but are striving to function within their given social structures, the family being one institution that is questioned but not discarded. They are both cowed by authority (**Angels**) and laugh in its face (**U-Turn**). One hopes the situations in **In Praise** will give rise to a real confrontation and that his future films will arrive at some resolutions.

He views his characters with a sharply critical yet unfailingly sympathetic eye — the effect being that you can't hate any of them but would sure like to give some of them a good smack in the head. Yet he also has a taste for the whimsical and a knack for rendering action spontaneous that his openness to improvisation ensures he will never lose.



As the quest ends in **U-Turn**

Much of Kaczender's style arises from the fact that he is somewhat of a misfit. He left his homeland more or less by force and Canada is by no means his idea of dreamland. Where would he like to be? "Not just one place. I'm a wanderer," he says. But having chosen Canada he has also determined to work with the situation to his best advantage. The result is a product that is very much Canadian — no other place on earth could have given rise to his films. And, being an outsider, he sees us in a way that we cannot see ourselves, not having been weaned on our cultural frailties. It's a classic irony. This is not to say that his Hungarian vision of Canada is the definitive one but his characters, although often universal types, are unmistakably Canadian in essence.

Also — an integral part of his style — he likes to work with the same people to establish a confident working pattern. "It's so difficult to make a movie, why not make it easier by working with people who support you and who are enthusiastic." And whom you can trust.

Kaczender, though still an independent, has what he terms an ideal working relationship with Robert Lantos and Stephen Roth of RSL Productions, who produced **In Praise**

and are also producing his next feature *Agency*, from the novel by Paul Gottlieb. He has nothing but praise for this happy liaison.

Cinema Canada interviewed George Kaczender recently in his Montreal apartment. There is an air of arrogance about him but it is tempered by a quiet sense of humor that is, above all, self-deprecating. He vows that he loses his cool very quickly. "I start shouting and I probably alienate a lot of people because of that. Also when someone is stupid I become very impatient and aggressive." But when he speaks he does so off-handedly, flatly, as though everything is easy and of equal consequence. The rare moments when he does raise his voice to emphasize a point, the glasses on the table rattle and a loud 'tok' registers on tape.

On the eve of release of his third feature, George Kaczender is an artist in progress. "I'm growing up," he says. "My goal is to make a masterpiece. If I can't, it's too bad, but I enjoy the process. It applies not just to work, it applies to life as well. You really have to enjoy the process."

Careerwise, does he have any regrets? "No-o-o-o-o," he says.

Cinema Canada: *Your films have won several awards and critical response has been very good. How important is that to you, both personally and in terms of the future success of your films?*

George Kaczender: "Anybody who tells you he's not interested in what the critics say is a liar. It's very important to be criticized. You shouldn't be able to get away with sloppiness."

"I respect intelligent criticism regardless of its effect — its emotional effect on me. I'd rather read good reviews than bad reviews but I don't mind reading an intelligent analysis of the mistakes I made. What I hate, and I have encountered this in Toronto with *U-Turn* particularly, that some of the criticisms were merely malicious and personal... I mean criticism should be an art form — and if it's not done in that spirit, then you don't really want to listen to it.

Angels was the official entry at Cannes in '68, U-Turn was the official Canadian entry at Berlin in '73, and In Praise was pre-selected but not chosen for this year's Cannes Festival. What importance do you attach to festivals?

"It's important if you win a prize. But if you don't, it's a letdown. It's prestigious to be representing the country and to be chosen... It makes you feel good, but is it going to help the film?"

Isn't it good exposure?

"Yes, it's good I suppose. But what if you get some bad publicity that may damage the film commercially before it comes out? It's risky."

What's been the public response to your films? How well have they done commercially?

"Not well.... *U-Turn* did well in Montreal. I don't understand why the film did so much better in Montreal than in Toronto, for example. In Montreal the film ran for about three months in the Avenue. But in Toronto it didn't do well and in the States it didn't do well either. They liked the film

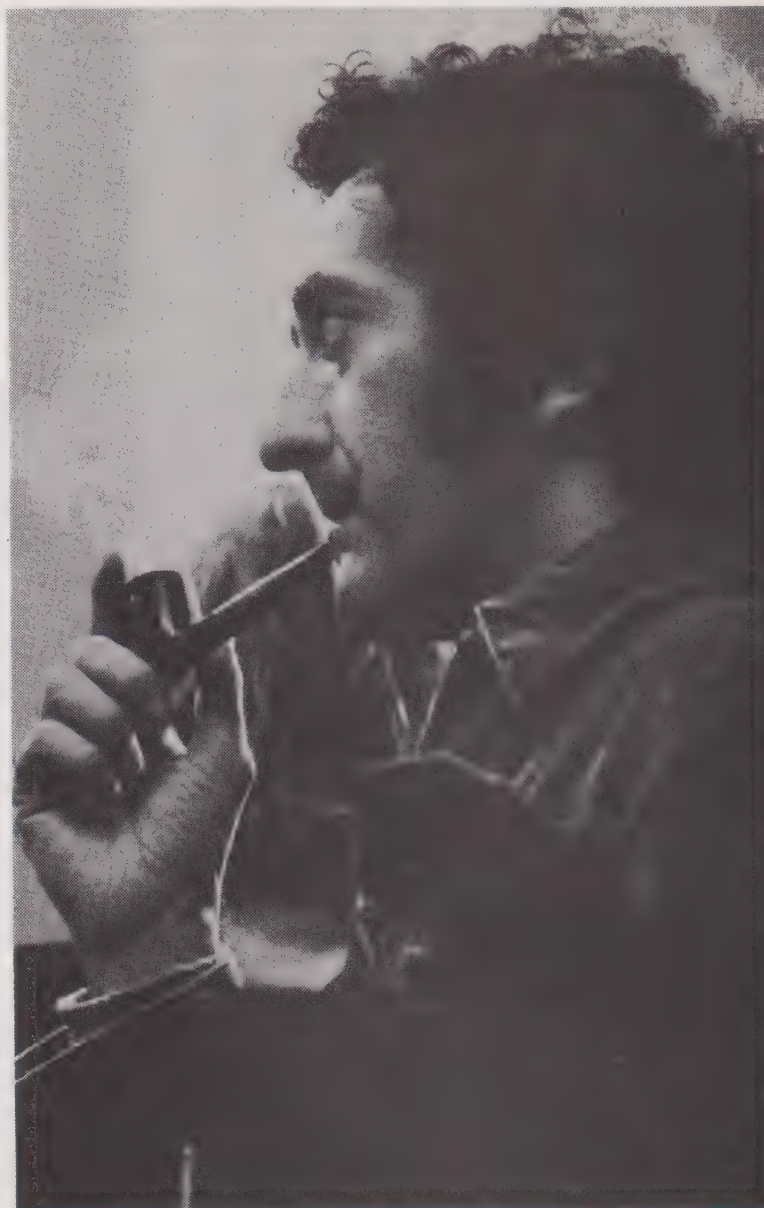
but it's just too quiet for Americans. Maybe it was boring, I don't know. (laughter) You saw it.

"Probably if I looked at it now I would want to take it back to the cutting room and recut it or remake it..."

"I'm not one of those directors who like to think and talk a great deal about the films I've done — I like to look forward to my next project and I'm more interested in what I'm doing now.

"I should be able to make at least one film a year... The way I make movies is not just directing them on the floor, but I like to work on the script, I like to edit the films myself — that takes another three, four months. I like to supervise everything.

"I could make a film every year if financing were easy. But in the past I wasted so much time and energy just trying to make a film and not succeeding. You could lose your touch with big hiatuses between films. You don't really want to pause too much.



Director George Kaczender

photo: Lois Siegel

Angels and U-Turn were based on stories written in collaboration with you. How do you feel now working with someone else's material, i.e. Stephen Vizinczey's In Praise...?

"I don't mind it because if something is not close to me I won't choose it. I must have an affinity with the original



A steamy scene left on the cutting room floor

work, either emotional interest or intellectual interest, before I can generate enough enthusiasm to be able to work on it.

"I worked with Paul Gottlieb quite closely on the screenplay. That was his first screenplay. Paul is a very good writer and we work well together. He's doing *Agency*."

In Praise would seem to be the most personal of your films. Andras (Tom Berenger) is your contemporary.

"That's right! Exactly! We are exactly the same age. I've lived through a great many situations from the book and Stephen, when he was writing the book, was my best friend. We talked a great deal about the book and we experienced a lot together in Hungary and here. It's almost like reliving and reexperiencing an era for me. As you say, it's very personal."

How closely does the film follow the novel?

"Pretty closely. It's a picaresque novel and there are more episodes in the book than in the film. For logistic reasons we did some juggling, incorporating two or three characters into one, shifting of countries, and dropping out characters entirely, but the spirit is the same. When you're translating a literary work into film you are obviously taking liberties — you're not illustrating a book if you're really interested in cinema. You're translating and adapting it into another medium that is entirely different — based on different values. But I don't think Stephen is going to be upset about it. He understands cinema..."

How big a role do the politics and history play in the film?

"There is one segment with Bobbie (Susan Strasberg) and she's involved with Andras in the Revolution. Politics come in heavily with this woman. But even with Maya (Karen Black) certain things are implied in a more subtle way. You never forget that you are in Hungary and you never forget that you are under Stalinism. It's there and it's very important for me that it's there because I suffered that. Immigration was also very important for me. That's not much politics but it's important in terms of establishing yourself in a new culture."

Your political background is evident in your previous films, short and feature-length. There is always some threatening figure — usually a power figure or a peer group. Some of the images are also threatening. Is this conscious?

"Partially. Look, I was brought up in a country that was never free politically. I've always been very conscious of freedom and repression because I suffered so much as a child in terms of being hassled and politically molested. Persecuted. I lived in fear and trembling all the time and it must have an effect on you. You learn to hate the status quo. After awhile you have to fight it or escape it. It stays with you. Stays in your nightmares..."

"Freedom for me is very very important. I suppose I'd go so far as to say that maybe I am trapped in my struggle and quest for freedom..."

"My real fight is against authoritarianism."

Watching your films I've been impressed with what seems to be a natural flair for comedy. Are you interested in doing an outright comedy?

"Yes, I am. It's such an incredibly difficult style of expression and I am slowly working myself into it now. You'll see in *In Praise* that there are a great deal of comedic elements in it that I hope will come through effectively. And in public screenings I'll watch the film very carefully from this viewpoint to see whether all the intentions are realized properly or not. If I find that everything comes off the way I'd planned, then I'll have more confidence to do a comedy next time. There's nothing more pleasing than to see the audience having a good time."

Are you happy with In Praise?

"It feels very good. I am very comfortable with the film. It's possible that in time I won't look at it so comfortably as I do today. But right now I am really happy with the film."

Did you try new formal experiments in In Praise in terms of style?

"Very much so. I was trying to give the film a great deal of visual fluidity, and avoided breaking up the scenes. I was trying to edit them in the camera as much as I could. I was extremely conscious of spatial relationships in terms of emotional content. I prepared this film very carefully. But at the same time I always leave room for improvisation — within the parameters of the scene. Also I was very conscious of lighting. I wanted a sort of Rembrandtish mood to the film. I made sure there's always a visible light source in the frame — either a lamp or a window — to give realism and beauty to the image."

How did you handle the erotic scenes? What criteria do you set up for yourself?

"Well, the criteria is realism in its pure literary meaning. I don't mean naturalism, I mean realism. I am very conscious of suggesting, of not overstating, of not revealing too much visually. I'm most conscious of taste — acceptable taste, so you don't cringe watching it. It's very important in love scenes to make them just beautiful enough... Even if it's very sort of down-to-earth it has to have a certain mystery and a certain feeling and a certain visual treatment that is unique. It's difficult to say what makes it work..."

What's the most important thing you've learned in your directing career?

"Mmmm... Inspiration. To give inspiration to everybody around you is the most important thing. To create an ambience where actors can work. To inspire them; to create an environment where they can create. It becomes a temple of work — the set."

Do you find that difficult to accomplish?

"No. Well — it comes naturally. In the past I probably had to work on it but now it's easier and easier. In fact, the best result I ever had was on *In Praise*. The first time it happened

in my life that I shot a film without negative anxiety if you know what I mean. I had such a marvellous time doing it that I didn't want to stop shooting. It never happened to me that I didn't look forward to the end of a shoot. I dreaded the thought that it was going to be over. I would have liked to just go on and on shooting."

Sounds exciting.

"Yes. And it never happened to me before. I was deeply depressed after it was over. I lived in a world of illusion that I created on the set and I was thrown back to horrible reality." (laughter)

Then the editing.

"Yes. Editing is loving. I love editing. In the winter there's nothing more gratifying than sitting in the cutting room and editing your film."

Why did you choose Agency for your next film?

"Various reasons. I wanted to work with Paul Gottlieb again. I liked the concept of the book. And it's a commercial treatment of a major theme that I'm interested in."

I understand you're starting to shoot Agency this fall.

"Well I'd better. Because I'm already broke." (laughter) □

GEORGE KACZENDER'S FILMOGRAPHY

Feature Films

1977	In Praise of Older Women
1972-73	U-Turn
1969	Don't Let The Angels Fall

Half Hour Dramatized Shorts

1971	Brown Wolf
1967	Little White Crimes
1966	The World of Three
1966	The Game
1965	You're No Good
1964	Phoebe

Documentaries

1976	It Happened to Me
1975	Women Want...
1975	Ontario Election '75
1975	Colonel By's Peacable Waterway
1975	Up to Standard
1974	They Don't Build Them Like They Used To
1967	Sabre and Foil
1967	Track a Shadow
1963	City Scene
1963	La Femme des Reves
1962	Ballerina
1962	Nahanni

Educational Films

1971	The Story of a Peanut Butter Sandwich
1970	A Pair of Blue Jeans
1970	Almost Anyone Can Build a House
1970	Newton
1969	Marxism
1969	Freud

the best of the nfb?

by Gene Waltz

The National Film Board of Canada will be forty years old in 1979. The letters NFB are as recognizable in Canada as almost any other three letter groupings. Abroad the NFB has enjoyed a growing reputation, highlighted by last year's representation at the Academy Awards broadcast in Hollywood. And courses in NFB films taught at one of the foremost film schools in the U.S. were highly publicized during the past year.

Recently the Film Studies Association of Canada, an organization of people interested in film as an aesthetic and academic pursuit, conducted an informal survey of its membership to determine whether there was a recognizable body of films by the NFB that clearly established themselves as superior to the others. The results are rather surprising and enlightening — if not about the relative quality of NFB films, then perhaps about their distribution to and/or reputation among many of the people who teach film in this country.

The F.S.A.C. membership was asked (rather clumsily) to list the "ten best, most useful, or your favorite NFB films." One third of the respondents chose not to list any films at all, several stating that they did not have enough information on or familiarity with NFB films. Many people could not list ten films, some choosing to mention only two or three. A couple of people took short cuts and simply stated "all of

Gene Waltz is a member of the Canadian Film Studies Association and a professor of film at the University of Manitoba.

How would you do if asked to list the ten best, most useful or favorite National Film Board films? The Film Studies Association put this question to its members and here are the results.



Paul Anka croons in Kroitor's *Lonely Boy*



A twirling majorette during a winter celebration Brault and Groulx's *Les Raquetteurs*"

ral (1954, Colin Low), *Hunger* (1973, Peter Foldes), *J.A. Martin, Photographe* (1977, Jean Beaudin), *Memorandum* (1965, John Spotton and Donald Brittain), *On est au coton* (1970, Denys Arcand), *The Railrodder* (1965, Gerald Potterton), *Rouli-roulant*, or *The Devil's Toy* (1966, Claude Jutra), *Sad Song of Yellow Skin* (1970, Michael Rubbo), *Street Musique* (1972, Ryan Larkin) and Alexis Tremblay, *Habitant*.

The survey was interesting for those films mentioned and for those films noticeable by their absence (for whatever reasons). Award-winning films which failed to garner any votes at all were: *Evolution*, *High Steel*, *Paddle to the Sea*, *Tchou-tchou*, *Whistling Smith*, and *Wrestling*. Only one vote was cast for *Neighbors*, *Universe*, *Volcano: an Inquiry into the Life and Death of Malcolm Lowry*, and *Walking*. Are these films victims of that perennial Canadian malady of works of art being recognized elsewhere but not by their countrymen?

The survey was not a large one and perhaps not a representative sampling. But it was not insignificant in that those surveyed are responsible for much of the post-secondary training film studies in Canada. More importantly it was meant not as a definitive list but as a beginning. The NFB's international reputation deserves more systematic investigation here in Canada. More surveys should be made — broader ones, even narrower ones. Booking patterns of NFB films in schools, community groups, and on TV should be fully computed. Perhaps then the impact and the importance of the NFB can be registered.

McLaren's films" and "all of Pierre Perrault's films."

Over one hundred films were mentioned at least once on one list or another. This in itself is quite a testimony to the general quality of NFB productions and also, I would think, to its range. Of these one hundred films, the one mentioned more often than any other was *Lonely Boy*, the twenty-six and one-half minute ironic documentary of pop singer Paul Anka made in 1961 by Roman Kroitor for the famed "B unit."

Second on the survey was *Mon Oncle Antoine*, the 1971 feature film directed by Claude Jutra.

Third was *Les Raquetteurs*, the amusing twenty-eight minute documentary on winter festivities in Quebec filmed by Michel Brault and Gilles Groulx in 1958.

In fourth position, rather surprisingly, was *Back-Breaking Leaf*, a half-hour documentary about the southern Ontario tobacco industry made in 1959 by Terence Macartney-Filgate.

After this came *Grierson*, the 57 minute documentary tribute to the first head of the NFB, produced and directed by Roger Blais; *Paul Tomkowicz: Street Railway Switchman*, a nine minute homage to a hardy old Polish emigré made by Roman Kroitor in 1954; *Pas de Deux*, the stunning Norman McLaren

ballet and special effects piece; *Nobody Waved Goodbye*, Don Owen's 1964 documentary-turned-fiction-feature; *Wake Up, mes bons amis* or *Un pays sans bon sens*, Pierre Perrault's investigation of nationalism; *City of Gold*, Pierre Berton's nostalgic recollection of Dawson City made by Wolf Koenig and Colin Low; *Waiting for Fidel*, Michael Rubbo's film about trying to film Fidel Castro in 1974; and *The Merry World of Leopold Z*, an entertaining film about a snowplow operator on Christmas eve made in 1965 by Gilles Carle.

Other films singled out were: *Le chat dans le sac* (1964, Gilles Groulx), *Cor-*

'mon oncle' revisited

by Paul G. Socken

A viewer of Claude Jutra's "Mon Oncle Antoine" comes away from the film reflecting on two difficult questions: if the film is about the youth and maturing of young Benoît, why is it titled "Mon Oncle Antoine"? And what, then, is the importance of Benoît's presence?

Attempting to answer those central questions whose concerns lie at the very heart of the film, one grapples with a host of others: What is the reason for the setting — a small mining

town encircled by mountains of asbestos? What is the significance of the constant preoccupation with death and why does the action take place at Christmas time? How is the social reality portrayed? And what is the townspeople's attitude toward religious institutions and rites of the church?

Let us first examine the personage of Antoine. He is a man who, as undertaker for the village, lives with death and yet is repulsed by it; he has no children of his own but is the guardian of two; he dreams of owning a hotel



Smothered in furs and cut-off from the world by mountains of asbestos in Jutra's *Mon Oncle Antoine*

in the United States but does not act on that dream, and, finally, he is a man cuckolded. To put the preceding in symbolic terms, Antoine must confront the past and yet he is terrified by it; he is a man without a future for himself and yet responsible for that of others, a man desperate to escape his plight but who does not do so, and in the final analysis he is deceived by the one nearest and dearest to him.

Antoine is Quebec. Quebec's future is uncertain and its past places demands on the present. Quebec is the victim of escapism as so many have forsaken her if not by physically leaving, then by abandoning their cultural heritage. And Quebec too has been deceived by what it thought to be its closest allies — the Church and the politicians.

Benoît's presence is crucial to this drama as he represents the youth that will inherit all that he is witness to. He is very much a spectator of the action that is unfolding, but he undergoes a profound transformation himself. The trip he takes with Antoine to pick up the corpse at the bereaved family's rural house is literally a voyage from innocence to experience. His initial eagerness at the prospect of accompanying Antoine turns to sober second thoughts as he helps him put the body in the coffin, and finally to revulsion and disgust as Antoine sobbingly relates his deepest fears. The whisky,

offered to Benoît so many times on the way there and just as often refused, is consumed by him on the way back. Benoît too, then, must fortify himself against bitter reality just as Antoine did before him. That Benoît's lot will not be any better than Antoine's is suggested at such moments.

An examination of the setting and other contributing effects and techniques will reinforce this interpretation. Jutra sets his film in a mining town whose mountains of asbestos cut it off from the rest of the world and symbolize the limited horizons for the townspeople and thus their entrapment. Even though they may leave temporarily, as does M. Poulin for the woods, their departure is not permanent because their minimal education and skills prevent them from succeeding in the world beyond the company-town.

The portrait of the town as a social reality is revealing and poignant. The company that owns the mine is English and so are the lower echelons of management. A representative of the company throws favours to the children from his horse-drawn carriage — the ultimate gesture of condescension. There will be no raise for the workers of the mine this year just as there was none last year.

The class distinctions are not limited, though, merely to the division between the English and the French. The distance between the wealthy lawyer's wife and the other French-speaking citizens exemplifies the stratification within the French community.

But for all the tears in the social fabric, there are moments when it seems remarkably resilient. After Benoît throws the snowball that frightens the company representative's horse, Carmen shows her approval and we know the others are delighted. And when Carmen's father comes to pick up her wages without a single caring glance toward her, the people in the store are galvanized in their antipathy for him. In addition, the announcement of the marriage of a young girl gives rise to a spontaneous outburst of joy by all. These moments portray a sense of community and solidarity among the poorer French-Canadians that is as much a part of the film as is their desperate economic situation, but they do not constitute its major focal point.

The action takes place at Christmas time — the celebration of a birth — and yet death is omnipresent. It is as if the characters' lives were defined by the constant presence of death since life can be emphasized in this way to be fragile and man as vulnerable. The scene in which Benoît chases Carmen, who is wearing a wedding veil, around the coffins is an eloquent dramatization of this idea. Life and death are boldly juxtaposed to portray the characters' helplessness not only in a social but in a metaphysical sense as well.

The attitude toward religion shows these Quebeckers as casting aside their historically close ties with the Church. Although the church building is geographically at the centre of the town, the rites of the church are treated flippantly and often with disdain. Benoît and the priest snack on the host and sacramental wine, and the Virgin Mary and the Holy Ghost are the objects of ridicule.

Adrift from the social and economic mainstream and no longer reassured by their traditional closeness with the Church, the characters are groping for substance and stability. There is not a great deal of dialogue and there are very few if any sustained conversations. The lives of the men and women seem therefore to be contained within themselves, and the sense of community mentioned earlier is more potential than real. In addition, shadows are everywhere present and often there is a lack of sharp definition. This effect contributes to the feeling that the characters are not complete and are searching for an identity and for a place for themselves.

For anyone sensitive to Quebec's social and cultural dilemma, "*Mon Oncle Antoine*" is an important work of art that merits the closest scrutiny.

Paul G. Socken is an assistant professor of French at the University of Waterloo's Department of Classics and Romance Languages.

john grierson

the canadian connection

by Doug Herrick

There was a man who felt that films should educate and enlighten. His name was John Grierson, and the years he spent in Canada have been felt by every filmmaker working in the country. At the end of October, a retrospective of films, made during the war when Grierson headed up the National Film Board will be shown in Boston. Doug Herrick, the man behind the screenings, has gathered together the following background on the man and his career.



Grierson on the Scottish Television's set for *This Wonderful World*

In 1924, a ship loaded with thirty thousand cases of Scotch whiskey left Glasgow, destined for the thirsty shores of Prohibition America. In addition to its illegal cargo, the vessel also carried a 26-year-old passenger named John Grierson.

Grierson was heading for the University of Chicago on a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship, and the scope of his study would be nothing less than American culture itself. During his four-year visit, he would come in contact with the films of Robert Flaherty and Eisenstein. While reviewing Flaherty's *Moana* in 1926, Grierson would invent a word onto which he would focus much theoretical debate and creative action during his lifetime. The word was "documentary."

In 1924, Grierson would also visit Canada for the first time. A decade earlier, Canada had become the first country to set up a government filmmaking unit. In 1921, this original unit under the Department of Trade and Commerce became the Canadian Government Motion Picture Bureau, and it was this institution that would provide Grierson with a valuable model of how the documentary film could be used by the public sector. Grierson would return to Great Britain in 1928, and approach the British government with his film theories. The result would be nothing less than a documentary film movement. The extent to which the Canadian film unit influenced the Empire Marketing Board film unit that Grierson created in London is not certain. But any debt in his thinking that Grierson may have owed Canada was more than repaid a decade later when he returned to Ottawa to create a filmmaking institution that would remain his ultimate achievement: The National Film Board of Canada.

Most of the literature surrounding John Grierson tends to emphasize his contribution to the British documentary movement of the 1930's, over his legacy to Canada. But the links between Grierson and Canadian filmmaking are more extensive than the six years he actually spent at the National Film Board. Grierson first came to Canada as a student, and left the country as a lecturer at McGill University. He died a year later in 1972. Although Grierson's Empire Marketing Board and General Post Office film units have rightly earned an important place in the history of the government-sponsored film, they lasted only about four years each. In comparison, the National Film Board is the oldest government film unit, and will celebrate its 40th anniversary next year. But more important than its longevity, the Film Board has disproved the old adage that government film units that do survive, invariably become compromised by politics and cease to remain innovative.

The National Film Board survived its first crucial years because in 1939, at 41 years of age, John Grierson was at the peak of his organizational and promotional talents. Everything he had learned in England at the Empire Marketing Board and General Post Office about integrating filmmaking and bureaucratic structures was ready to be applied again. That year, a sympathetic Canadian Prime Minister and a World War would provide Grierson with the freedom to transform a moribund government film unit operating out of an abandoned sawmill, into what would become the largest documentary film studio in the Western world.

Doug Herrick is the film librarian for the Canadian Consulate General in Boston and is preparing a retrospective of Grierson's wartime propaganda films to be screened at Harvard University.

Grierson is famous for his seemingly anti-aesthetic pronouncements on film. Indeed, he chose to make a career out of the medium not because he was intrigued by its artistic or formal possibilities, but because of its social and political possibilities. While studying in the United States, he became convinced that, of all the mass media, film possessed the greatest capacity to educate and influence large numbers of people. But he also realized that to find support and sponsorship for his ideas about this expensive medium, he would have to go outside the motion picture industry. Grierson had visited Hollywood, and was aware that the emerging film moguls held little enthusiasm for the documentary film. Columbia Pictures' Harry Cohn typified the entertainment industry's appreciation of the genre at this time, by defining it as "a film without women."

Grierson only directed two films himself: *Drifters* (1929) and *Granton Trawler* (1934). He is primarily remembered for the former film, because its success created the support necessary to create the EMB unit. *Drifters* combined the accepted artistic standards for film of the day (strong creative cutting) with Grierson's social imperative (presenting a true picture of the British working man). Despite the praises extended to Grierson by such filmmakers as Paul Rotha and Joris Ivens for abandoning the joys of directing to create organizations to train others, it seems doubtful that the restless, cosmopolitan vision of John Grierson could ever have found fulfillment in the manipulation of cinematic forms. More often, he seemed to prefer manipulating social and political forms. When Grierson did address the issue of "art", the concept of "social purpose" was never far away. Grierson's life was a constant battle against the idea of "self" in art. For him, an artist had to have a commitment to something outside of himself before his art could achieve significance. The aesthetics of pure art and the primacy of the artist remained for Grierson too limiting. It would restrict art to a level of personal vanity. Instead Grierson proposed an aesthetic for art based on life: By observing and making choices about life, each individual would develop his own aesthetic, or morality. Only when an individual fulfilled in form his own particular world view could true art result. Without this basic moral underpinning, artistic expression would forever remain simply a person affectation.

This philosophy grew out of Grierson's experiences and family life in Glasgow, where he spent his childhood. It was a period of militant labor agitation and the emerging Clyde-side movement. Born of upper middleclass parents in 1898, Grierson claims to have been on a soapbox from the age of sixteen. He was apparently arrested several times for making speeches, and was blacklisted by the local companies. Grierson never more than dabbled in revolutionary politics, however; his motivations were too intellectual and his ideas complex for any one social movement or political dogma. Instead, he developed a comprehensive world view based on a well-defined sense of social right and wrong and the need for reform. His father was a school teacher and his mother a socialist and suffragette. Thus his early life at home is remembered as intense in moral, religious and political debate. When World War One broke out Grierson served aboard a British minesweeper, and after the armistice entered the University of Glasgow. It was here that he became active with the Fabian Socialists before graduating with distinctions in English and Moral Philosophy.

This Fabian element in Grierson's life should be reviewed, because it illuminates an important principle in his approach to social change. The Fabian Socialists, such as George Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells, were anti-Marxist, and believed that man's economic activities were best preserved in socialism in the same way that his political rights were best preserved in a democracy. The Fabians were disenchanted with "laissez-faire" capitalism's tendency to permit certain groups of individuals to dominate the living standard of the majority. But instead of class warfare and revolution, the Fabians believed in reform, progressive legislation, and gradual improvement of social services. State socialism in England today is to a certain extent an outcome of this philosophy. In any case, one of the reasons why Grierson was so successful in creating his documentary movement and getting the British and Canadian governments to finance it was because, in the Fabian sense, he was a radical, but not a revolutionary. He worked within the system, and no other person in the history of film could manipulate the system like Grierson. By keeping his projects above the squabble of party politics, his film units tended to survive the electoral fortunes of any one government. In addition, he had no qualms about working with conservative companies like Shell Oil. Because of this, the documentary film never received the leftist reputation in Great Britain that it did in the United States.



Grierson shooting *Drifters* in 1929

After graduating from the University of Glasgow in 1923, Grierson was approached to enter politics but declined. Instead he went to North America. It was here in Chicago, working with the journalist Walter Lippman, that Grierson's ideas about using film to educate and enlighten began to crystalize.

While in North America, Grierson didn't just stumble upon the Canadian Government Motion Picture Bureau. During the 1920's, the MPB was a rare institution, with an international reputation for producing quality information and travel films. This film unit had grown out of the Exhibits and Publicity Bureau of Department of Trade and Commerce which had been set up in 1914, to promote the sale of Canada's abundant natural resources. In 1921, the film unit was reorganized and became the MPB. It was given the expanded

role of producing information films for all other government departments in addition to its travel and trade film responsibilities.

One of the flaws of the MPB that was to cripple its activities later on was the fact that it was set up as a theatrical business enterprise. Under the leadership of Raymond Peck, the MPB emphasized sales of its films to theatrical markets, and chose not to transfer prints to the 16mm and 28mm non-theatrical formats of the day. Soon, government departments wishing to distribute non-theatrically started setting up their own film units, which tended to siphon off money from the MPB. But in 1928, the year Grierson returned to London to set up the EMB film unit, these were not major problems for the MPB. It continued to have no rival in the area of government-sponsored films, and its prints were sold all over the world.

While building the EMB film unit, Grierson continued to make trips to the MPB in Ottawa. There were two reasons for this. The first was to report on the activities of the MPB to build support for and improve the EMB. Also Grierson realized that if the EMB was ever to achieve wide circulation of its films, non-theatrical outlets had to be set up. To do this, he had to convince schools, churches, clubs, and other organizations to buy projectors. And obviously before this could happen, he had to supply them with something to screen. Thus, Grierson also used these trips to Canada to bring back large amounts of MPB films, which were to become the basis for the first major non-theatrical film library in England.

During the early years of the depression, the EMB expanded the role of Grierson's film unit to form tighter economic bonds and promote greater trade among the Commonwealth countries. But at the same moment that government-sponsored film was assuming a greater role in England, the MPB was entering into a period of decline.

Sound had come to film in the late 1920's, and like film producers everywhere, the Canadian government at first hesitated to purchase the new, costly equipment. Soon the government was struggling with a depression economy, and there was no money available for such a low-priority item as sound equipment. By 1933, the MPB still hadn't made a single sound film, and all of its theatrical markets had dried up. Although its films were now being converted to non-theatrical formats, these brought in no money. In the private sector, American motion picture companies were completing their stranglehold over the Canadian entertainment industry, and it appeared that filmmaking in Canada was a thing of the past. Even Grierson no longer came to Canada. He had moved his film unit to the General Post Office, and was too busy producing such classics as *Night Mail* and *Housing Problems*.

In Canada, a reaction started to set in. In 1934, the National Film Society of Canada was formed. This institution, which would later evolve into the Canadian Film Institute, was concerned about American domination of the film industry, and the decline of the MPB. One of the first things that it did was to publish a lengthy report highly critical of the state of film in Canada. One of the signatories to this document was a young editor named Ross McLean, who would later replace Grierson as head of the National Film Board. McLean accepted the position as personal secretary to the Canadian High Commissioner Vincent Massey, and went to London with him the next year. There McLean met Grierson, and soon became convinced that here was just the man to

shake the MPB out of its doldrums. With the support of Vincent Massey (His brother is the actor Raymond Massey) McLean sent a report back to Ottawa in 1936, outlining the success of the British government's film efforts, and recommended that Grierson come to Canada to study the situation. With the National Film Society and Peck's successor at the MPB, Frank Badgley, applying pressure in Ottawa, it was finally decided that it was time for Grierson to return to Canada.

In 1938, Grierson submitted his report on the MPB and returned to London. Among other things, he had recommended that an advisory committee be created to centralize film agency for the the government, meaning that other departments would have to give up their film units. The Minister of Trade and Commerce accepted the report and cabled Grierson to return to Canada to help implement his ideas. Grierson realized that the best method would be to formalize this agency through legislation, so with the help of Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, on May 2 1939, the National Film Board was created through Act of Parliament.

The initial structure of the National Film Board revealed the two basic loyalties that would soon confront each other. Of the seven Board members, three were to come from the civil service and three were to come from outside the government. The Minister of Trade and Commerce was to be chairman of the Board, reflecting the fact that the MPB still remained under his control, while the position of Government Film Commissioner was responsible to the Board, but independent of civil service rules. The differences in style and work routine between the civil servants and those not used to government procedure would lie dormant for awhile, but under the pressures generated by the Board's new wartime role, the antagonism would increase.

Several months after the creation of the Board, the Government Film Commissioner's post was still vacant. Grierson had wanted a Canadian to fill the position, but no qualified individuals were found. But on August 31, 1939, Canada found itself at war with Germany, and the position could no longer be left vacant. Grierson was in the United States at the time, and was offered the position. He accepted with the understanding that it would be temporary. Installed in an office in the West Bloc of the Parliament buildings in Ottawa with Stuart Legg as production supervisor and Ross McLean as his assistant, Grierson started hiring filmmakers. From the defunct GPO film unit came Stanley Hawes, Norman McLaren, Evelyn Spece, and Raymond Spottiswoode to train the young Canadians Grierson had recruited. Among the latter were Sydney Newman, Tom Daly, Michael Spencer, James Beveridge, Don Frasier and Guy Glover.

The Motion Picture Bureau was increasing its staff also, and under the increased tempo of production, conflicts between the two groups started breaking out. Grierson's group was predominantly young, college-educated, non-conformist, and self-consciously bohemian. Their style and pace were totally at odds with Frank Badgley's slow, routine-oriented Motion Picture Bureau staff. As tempers flared during the 24-hour shifts in the sawmill and battle lines were drawn, Grierson tendered his resignation. It was December, 1940, and he had explained in a letter that he could no longer mediate between the two factions. By resigning, he claimed that he would be free to speak out on the structural problems of the NFB. He saw these as the need for more money and flex-

ibility in hiring filmmakers, the problems of civil service regulations in an activity like filmmaking, and the problems of an independent MPB. In essence, Grierson was making a case for absorbing the MPB. Thanks in great part to the support of Prime Minister King, the NFB officially absorbed the MPB in June of 1941, and gained control of film production.

More and more power came to Grierson. In 1943, he became General Manager of the Wartime Information Board. Before this, the British government had named Grierson as its official censor for North America, and was sending him all the German propaganda footage captured off Bermuda en route to Latin America. In 1944, the Board incorporated a display and filmstrip section, starting its involvement in other forms of mass media.



Grierson at the NFB in 1942

The principle mandate of the National Film Board during the war was to communicate Canada's wartime policies and achievements to itself, and to the world at large. Thus, the "Canada Carries On" and "World In Action" series were created. Both series were similar in style to the "March Of Time" newsreels, and were narrated in "voice of doom" fashion by a young CBC broadcaster named Lorne Green. It was part of Grierson's philosophy that these films be released theatrically to gauge their success and quality. After six months, the films were reduced to 16mm. and distributed across Canada through the huge non-theatrical network set up to gain maximum exposure for the Board's films.

To a great degree, the series reflected the sensibilities of producer Stuart Legg, who was in charge of "Canada Carries On" from 1940 to 1943, and in charge of "World in Action" from 1942-1945. As compilation films, few credits were given

to individuals. The music and visuals were constructed to back up the commentary and build the editorial point of view. Legg was a student of montage theory, and much of the CCO and WIA style reflected his concern with the psychological impact of each image. In the WIA series especially, Legg goes to great lengths to build visual metaphors and create similes out of his editing, and work these off the narration to create irony, contrasts, and sometimes humor. Compared to the American War Department propaganda films, they were slightly less strident, shorter (rarely over 22 minutes), and wider in political and economic treatment.



Grierson speaking at the 25th Anniversary of the NFB in 1964

CCO was begun in 1940, as a monthly, one-reel series designed to dramatize to Canadians their participation in the war. By playing up communications and transportation issues, and showing Canada's strategic position relative to the North, it attempted to undercut isolationism and regional loyalties at home. Like the WIA series, its style was developed not out of extensive aesthetic debate, but the need to turn out material quickly, and present large amounts of information within a short format. Newsreel footage came from captured Axis propaganda, Free French and Russian Newsreel services, the British Ministry of Information, the U.S. Army Signal Corps, and Canadian sources.

The first film of the series was "Atlantic Patrol" (1940), which explained the Canadian Navy's role in protecting convoys bound for England. Among the other films in this series from 1940 were *Letter From Aldershot*, *Letter From Camp Borden*, *The Home Front*, *Children From Overseas*, *Wings of Youth*, and *Everywhere in the World*. Churchill's *Island* (1941) won a special Academy Award that year for its portrait of England in the dark days of the Blitz before the United States entered the war. Another popular film of the CCO series was *War Clouds In the Pacific* (1941), which predicted war between Japan and the U.S. and was released a few weeks before Pearl Harbor. Like many of this series, it was distributed widely in America by United Artists.

The CCO series was given to Sydney Newman and Guy Glover to produce when Stuart Legg took over responsibility for the WIA series. They had been concerned about the lack of Canadian material in the former series, and had complained to Grierson. They ended up continuing the series until 1951, firing Lorne Green shortly after the war in an attempt to tone it down. The WIA series had been started in June of 1942, and reflected Grierson's and Legg's global world view. The WIA films were rich in information, less pedantic than the American "Battle of..." films, and assumed a certain degree of historical knowledge on the part of the audience. It attempted to define the political and military forces that had brought the world to the brink in 1939, and suggested issues and problems that the world would have to face at the end of hostilities. This series was more popular outside of Canada than CCO, and was seen in about 6,000 theaters in the U.S. as well as in Latin America and the British Commonwealth countries. The films were generally twenty minutes in length, and included such titles as *Fortress Japan* (1944), *The Gates of Italy* (1943), *Geopolitik-Hitler's Plan For Empire* (1942), *Inside Fighting China* (1942), *Our Northern Neighbor* (1942), *Labor Front* (1943), *Spotlight on the Balkans* (1945), and *The War For Men's Minds* (1943).

In addition to the war films, Grierson also produced films designed to "bring Canada alive to itself." These films, with titles like *Peoples of Canada* (1941), *Painters of Québec* (1944), *Peace River* (1941), *Listen to the Prairies* (1941) and *High Over the Borders* (1943) were a main priority of Grierson, and insured that the Board would have a well-defined post-war function.

In 1945, Grierson resigned as Film Commissioner, and finished up his filmmaking activities in Canada. During the war, he had earned more than a few political enemies from his takeover of the MPB and the end-run tactics that he used to build up the NFB. He was tired of slugging it out with cabinet ministers and bureaucrats, and with the coming of peace, he decided that it was time to move on. He would return to Canada to tour the West in 1957, and again in 1964 to celebrate the Board's 25th anniversary. His last role in Canada would be as a lecturer at McGill.

Partially as a result of Grierson's ideas, government film units were created in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and, for a short time, North Carolina. Grierson's presence lives on at the NFB today through such programs as "Challenge For Change" and through the excellence of such directors as Donald Brittain and Michael Rubbo. Brittain, in particular, through his precise structure and succinct narration, has probably come closest to Grierson's desire to fuse the artistic and formal possibilities of film with its capacity to educate and inspire.

Film as a medium was born in 1895. Grierson followed three years later. His ideas on social change would grow and develop with that medium, and Grierson would devote his life to create institutions to insure that the capacity of film to educate and enlighten would be available as a matter of routine. As a filmmaker, John Grierson would probably have become famous in his own right. But his legacy was to go beyond the filmography of one man: it was to become, in a sense, the filmography of an institution. And Canada, as the home of that institution, has done well by its relationship with John Grierson.

TECHNISCOPE

Wide-Screen Quality
at 16mm Cost

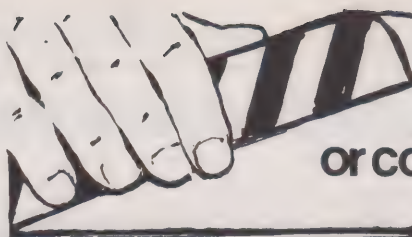
Techniscope, the revolutionary 35mm camera system which uses half the film and half the lighting to produce top-quality wide-screen (1:2.33) images is now available from Rosebud Films Ltd.

Our Arriflex and Cameflex cameras with Zeiss high speed lenses will save you money in camera rentals, filmstock, processing, and lighting.

Write or call for our brochure.

rosebud films

9 Cunningham Avenue
Toronto, M6K 1P1
tel: (416) 531-4277



**Need talented people
for your next documentary
or commercial shoot in Alberta?**

Call us Len Stahl, Alberta Motion Picture

Industries Association
347 Birks Building, 10113 - 104 Street
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5J 1A1
Telephone 403-424-3456

Film Industry Development Office
Alberta Business Development and Tourism
14th Floor, Capitol Square, 10065 Jasper Ave.
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5J 0H4
Telephone 403-427-2005

**cinema
canada**
a great
film magazine.

Film Rejuvenation
Film/Tape Distribution
Booking... Scheduling...
Shipping... Revising....
16mm - 35mm - VTR



Bonded Services International
205 Richmond St. West
Toronto, Ontario M5V 1V5
(416) 363-6414

Please send me
a subscription
to Cinema Canada
starting
with issue no.

**cinema
canada**

Subscription rates:

Institutions and companies	\$15.
Individuals	\$10.
Individuals abroad	\$12.

Name

Address

Postal Code

Telephone no.

Return to:
Cinema Canada
Box 398, Outremont Station,
Montreal, Canada H2V 4N3
Tel.: (514) 272-5354

on the road to a national cinema

by Florence Jacobowitz

Taking a detour from the great Canadian Cinema Debate, Florence Jacobowitz takes a look at the new German films, and draws parallels to the situation in Canada.

Much has been written lamenting the fact that the Canadian cinema, as it exists, is only a 'branch plant,' a colony of the mighty ever-spreading American cinematic empire. We have been weaned on the Hollywood model and have become junkies of cultural products which have been mistakenly adopted as our national cinema. We continue to, perhaps validly, blame American cultural imperialism for the situation we are in and yet simultaneously cannot rid ourselves of the need to compete with the Hollywood film form and language which we have been trained to love and desire. These paradoxical love/hate feelings bind us Canadians to a continuous schizophrenic state of confusion and stagnation. It has become too destructive and frustrating to compete with a culture and cinematic form neither relevant to our culture nor to our economic possibilities. In order to progress towards our goal of witnessing the emergence of a popular, commercially viable Canadian national cinema rooted within historic and economic actualities, it is time to move from the level of 'lament' to developing positive steps towards change.

One major difficulty has always been Canada's relative isolation and, therefore, lack of exposure to other countries (besides the States) who have taken alternate routes towards

the development of a national cinema. Their successes, pitfalls and struggles offer important, constructive 'lessons' and new possibilities worth investigating.

Sometimes, as Jean-Luc Godard has said, it is essential to 'take a detour,' to talk about the machine, one must go out of the factory that uses it; the basis of this discussion will be outside the world of Canadian cinema, so as to have a better view of it when we return.

The New German Cinema, (which spans, at least, the last fifteen years) like Canadian Cinema, emerged from a system still heavily colonized by Hollywood movies and American culture. Perhaps what unites the very diverse New German films can be seen in a quote from an interview in *Sight and Sound* with Rainer Werner Fassbinder, one of the most prolific and well known NGC filmmakers, who proclaims, "I am a German making films for a German audience." Again and again one clearly senses from these films the emergence of a much more personal cinema, the insistence upon self-identity and the need to situate oneself historically.

What most of us have loosely understood is that the New German Cinema burst forth with productions strongly subsidized by the federal government and T.V. networks; that the movement was more of a 'foreign-festival affair' rather than a national one and seems to be petering out (or some will smugly claim has died) in the last couple of years. The following is an attempt to demystify and understand some of the strengths and problems that confronted the New German Cinema.

Florence Jacobowitz is a graduate of the York University Fine Arts Department who is presently working on an MA at New York University.

In 1962 twenty-six filmmakers, writers and artists united to publish a manifesto proclaiming the beginning of the New German Cinema.

"... This cinema needs new forms of freedom: from the conventions and habits of the established industry, from intervention by commercial partners, and finally, freedom from the tutelage of other vested interests. We have specific plans for the artistic formal and economic realization of this New German Cinema. We are collectively prepared to take the economic risks. The Old Cinema is dead. We believe in the new."

In this short extract of a rather general statement, there exist three important keys to the beginnings of positive change. As Thomas Elassar points out in his informative article, *The Postwar German Cinema*, the group: 1) made aware and exposed the problems and shortcomings of the "old cinema" by openly publishing and publicizing their protest; 2) instead of attempting to "storm the industry that had left them out in the cold" and stop at the frustrating stage of rejection, they published a program of 'new freedoms' towards positive change; "We have specific plans..."; 3) they united on a common platform despite a wide range of personal interests; "We are collectively prepared to take economic risks..." The group — among them Alexander Kluge their political 'spokesman' — went on to successfully lobby members of the federal government and in 1965, the Kuratorium Junger Deutscher Film was set up to actualize the Oberhausen proposals and sponsor new filmmakers via interest free loans (that were more like grants than loans). Other important results were the formation of the following centres encouraging national cinematic growth: the Berlin and Munich film schools, the Berlin 'Aresenal' (a cinémathèque) and the German Film Archives in Berlin.



Bar scene from Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Angst Essen Seele Auf*

As the system is set up today, a German filmmaker seeking funds has the following options. Of the available government subsidies, the main governmental source is the FFA; Filmförderungsanstalt (Federal Film Board or Film Subsidies Bd). In 1967 this federal board was set up to distribute funds

collected from a box office levy imposed by the Film Subsidies Bill (Filmförderungsgesetz). Today there is a tax of .15DM (approximately 7 cents) on each ticket sold, and approximately \$7,500,000 is made available for film production from this levy. 'Deserving' scripts rated by the FBW (Filmbeurteilungsinstitut Wiesbaden) that meet a 'certain criteria' and promise a box office return are awarded, and/or producers whose films have brought in more than 500,000 customers. (Catch 22 of course is that one needs a certain amount of exposure before one can command a public and box office returns). Also awarded are certain winners of international film prizes. Mr. Elassar points out that these subsidies can be abused by encouraging the production of 'fast sellers' or sure box office successes such as soft porn films, or the Heimat-film and Lummel Schoolyard films. Sometimes filmmakers would produce the fast sellers in order to be able to fund their own projects. Meeting 'criteria' or film ratings might also discourage overtly political, historical or national themes and encourage instead a product that is 'internationally' appealing enough to sell.

Another source to approach is the Projekt Förderung des Bundesministeriums des Inneren (The Film Department of the Bonn Ministry of the Interior) responsible for 'culture.' Out of a budget of 80,000,000 DM spent on opera, theatre, museums, orchestras etc. only 5,600,000 DM is allocated to the advancement of film. The money is used to award screenplays, promote exhibitions, or donate as prize money and at least has no box office stipulations. (Some argue that this sort of funding allows filmmakers to produce films that are geared to festivals and thus bypass their home market altogether.)

The Kuratorium Junger Deutscher Film is a government organization funded by the various federal states (similar to Canadian provinces) who contribute the surplus of their cultural budgets (totalling a rather insignificant amount of approximately \$300,000). The funds are awarded to submitted screenplays and are designed to support 'new' directors, though Ron Holloway notes in an article in *Variety*, often even 'new' directors need connections ('names' and 'friends' of, for example, prominent T.V. producers) to qualify.

A main source of funding involves approaching the T.V. executive producers, the 'Redakteure' at one of the state supported T.V. networks. They will either entirely produce, co-produce or simply buy prints of a film to be aired on T.V. Filmmakers retain the rights to their films, excepting T.V. broadcasting rights which cannot be utilized until two years after the film is released. *Variety* argues that since the filmmaker must make his film according to normal T.V. format (excluding wide screen and cinemascope) the T.V. films are not "genuine movies." On the other hand, German national networks allow filmmakers much more freedom in making 'controversial' films. Tony Rayns points out that "American filmmakers like Kenneth Anger and Steve Dworkin found support from German T.V. when there was none to be had closer to home."

Television is vital to New German Cinema because of the medium's potential for massive national exposure. Filmmakers can reach an immediate audience estimated between 17-23 million viewers. Screening feature films on T.V. can be a disadvantage commercially, since, some argue, people feel they need not go see the films at theatres if they are soon to be shown on T.V. Here are some of the facts Edmund Luft

reports, in this year's *National Film Guide* from West Germany: This year ARD, ZDF and the regional third channel are airing some 1,000 feature films, the highest number ever screened. NGC films 'unspooled' on T.V. this year included Sinkel Brustellin's *Berlinger*, Peter Stern's *Sommernächte* and Wim Wenders' *Im Laufe der Zeit* (*In the Course of Time*). Schlöndorff's *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum*, the only subsidized film to gross more than its original subsidy investment, was rerun on T.V. which, Luft points out, reduces its theatre rerun possibilities. Most of Herzog's films, including *Kaspar Hauser*, are also scheduled.

The last source one can approach are the private investors who generally contribute 20-40 percent of production costs, (although the film *Hitler, A Career*, was made totally from private funds) it is, however, difficult to get investors to bank on German films that do not promise to be box office hits. Germany, like Canada, and unlike the United States, has kept tax shelter incentives to encourage investment by allowing investors to write off their losses. Producers in Berlin have 30 percent of the financial risk of bank credits not recouping reduced by a guarantee granted by the city and secured against the municipal budget. Tax sheltered production deals do not, on the whole, assist German or other 'national' films since foreign investors can take advantage of the deals (for example, by lensing a film in Germany after it has been conceived in the U.S.).

If a film is popular at festivals abroad or on certain networks the filmmaker can get another film subsidized without necessarily having reached, or spoken to the commercial audience who supposedly must share and relate to the national culture, history and mythologies presented in the New German films. The problem is still partially economic. Though the government is helping to subsidize many new films, there is still not enough money budgeted to both produce films and have them properly distributed, publicized and exhibited. (And yet filmmakers must keep producing in order to be subsidized at all.) Considering that there is no assured quota system in Germany, that the powerful Hollywood distributors control over 40 percent of the market and are quickly buying up many cinemas, it is, not surprisingly, difficult to get New German films properly distributed and exhibited. In 1971, twelve filmmakers (including Wim Wenders, R.W. Fassbinder, Uwe Brander) founded the Filmverlag der Autoren, a co-operative set up to distribute films. Almost two years ago the Filmverlag almost went bankrupt and was bailed out by Rudolf Augstein of *Der Spiegel* who bought a 55 percent interest in the company and invested \$300,000 of his life savings into the Filmverlag. Another private industrialist invested \$3,000,000 into Munich's largest distributing company, Constantin, which was going bankrupt. Although the Filmverlag exists and is growing, Luft reports that there are still many 'subsidized' films not being distributed, for example, *Rheingold*, the German entry to last year's Spring Berlin Festival with over \$100,000 in aid from the First German Video Net or Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's *Hitler-A Film from Germany*.

Public exposure to the cinema in general is a problem in Germany. *Variety* reported this year that there are 313 villages in Germany with 4 to 10 thousand people without a cinema altogether, 64 villages with 4,000 people have one cinema etc. and many theatres in the bigger cities have closed. The FFA (Film Subsidy Board) recently subsidized 60 per-

cent of a project to stimulate movie going; during the Berlin Film Festival a Kinomobile was set up to bring films to different villages. Although individuals or groups are opening 'alternate' cinema houses that are screening New German films, (like the Berlin Arsenal), there still is not enough box office return to cover production costs.

Many New German filmmakers have been increasingly co-producing with the close European market, and even Hollywood, (among them Wenders, Herzog and Fassbinder). It is somewhat ironic that these 'New German' filmmakers who were so genuinely concerned in an inherently 'German' cinema have begun to co-produce, and it is unfortunate, because it seems too early for a young movement that has yet to settle itself solidly, to successfully integrate co-productions.



The visions of an innocent: Kasper Hauser

Developing a new, national cinema that will be an immediate commercial success without the necessary exposure — and, in a way, education — is impossible. Journalists report that the "dark and bitter subjects of the New German Cinema accounts for the poor reception at home; personal slant, social and philosophical approach fails to click with the public." The political and historical statements are "too clear," too forthright. The fact is that Germany has not had a very entertaining recent past history. Many filmmakers have tried to express their postwar-guilt crisis and cultural insecurities, and deal with the confusion that arose from the

West German postwar need to forget its own past by trying to assimilate into other histories and cultures (predominantly American); many of Wim Wenders' characters are constantly 'preparing' new starts.

Wenders expressed some of his frustrations in an interview he gave Jan Dawson in Toronto a couple of years ago:

"Nobody's used to German films and nobody wants to see them. Nobody has confidence in films shot in Germany and about Germany, especially not in black and white — people in Germany are very suspicious, or even indifferent and there's a very, very strong opposition to the New German Cinema from what is left of the old industry, even a very fascist opposition... The way the New German films are handled by the German institutions, who'd prefer to have nothing to do with them and are rather disturbed if one of these films wins a prize. They'd prefer it to disappear somewhere. Especially in the distribution system over here, the opposition to German films is very, very heavy... It's pure schizophrenia. Because the only alternative is to have even more American films in the cinemas (already there are more than 80 percent) and they don't want that either. What they do want is national productions, but of films that look international. They don't want national films, but they want a national film industry. They want those wishy-washy international co-productions. They want what they call 'popular film.'"

Some New German filmmakers have tried bridging the gap between 'popular' films and New German films. The trick involves the ability to take a foreign grammar and use it to express something 'national.' The most prominent examples of this are the films of Fassbinder who has tried, as Thomas Elassar writes, to "reinvent Hollywood in the Germany of the seventies, since Hollywood is the language shared with the under-thirty working class and lower middle class." He uses beautiful exaggerated Hollywood images and fills them with German actualities. He makes one aware of one's condition as a victim in an oppressive society, and yet tries to show one how to cope, or even take steps towards change.

Still, the appreciation of the New German Cinema has been more international than national. The facts and figures seem to point to a decrease in the exhibition of New German films. Edmund Luft reports that German films exhibited domestically dropped from 26.5 percent in 1974 to 10 percent in 1977, 5 percent of which were co-productions. Out of 339 films exhibited last year, one third, 105, were from the U.S., 38 were German, 13 were German-foreign co-productions and the rest were from France, Italy, Hong Kong and England. Out of an entire gross of \$100,000,000, the films from the United States gross 55-60 million and the German films, 11 million. (This also means that 60 percent of the FFA's subsidies that help finance the production of New German films comes from taxing these American movies, something Canada never has learned to do.) The only really good news Luft reported was that out of the "local public of cinema-goers, 80 percent consists of young people, who (he hopes) will be inspired by the German cinemas' international acclaim to find their way back to the theatres — and it's beginning to happen."

In many of Wenders' films, the characters are often exploring, travelling in foreign places and 'crossing frontiers.'



Wearing the same shades in Wim Wender's *Im Lauf der Zeit*

He tries to explain the reason for this and, to me, it reflects an important key to the development of a national cinema:

"I think the notion of identity is a very new one and I think the cinema is, in a way, the art of things as well as persons becoming identical with themselves. And foreignness for me is just a throughway to a notion of identity. In other words, identity is not something you just have, you have to go through things to achieve it. Things have to become insecure in order to become secure in a different way. That's what I meant about foreignness; it's a way of losing the old notion of self evidence... In other words, perception depends on how much you allow yourself to perceive; it depends on your state of mind, on your receptivity... Crossing frontiers gives you a feeling of losing preconceptions."

My point in all this is only that an authentic 'national' cinema is 'new' cinema which is necessarily different and will demand new forms and an audience which will be open and willing to experiment and try out new forms; an audience with enough self-respect and interest in its own culture to open up and perceive its own films in a new light. And that's why it is particularly important that it is the *youth* in Germany who are taking pride in their own product (through the detour of foreign acclaim) and can turn back home and re-see and re-experience New German films in a new and meaningful way.

This is where we come home to Canada. The fight for a national cinema is, and will always be, a fight on all fronts; an economic battle of levies, quotas, better distribution and exhibition, and an ideological battle of decolonized perception. To really get at the root of the problem of a Canadian culture crisis, and to initiate change, Canadians must investigate the centres and sources for nurturing the national and historical self-images. That instead of being encouraged to emulate and build upon Euro-Americanized products and foreign cultures, our universities, film departments, cinemas and festivals should be exposing future Canadian filmmakers, Canadian critics and Canadian audience 'experiencers' to an already existing rich economically viable, and even exciting, Canadian cinema both in English and *en français*. Perhaps, like our German counterparts, we will be convinced that we have the grounds for exploration and creative growth, right here at home.

in a pessimistic mood

The Montreal critics festival kicks off the festival season in Canada, and this year, it kicked up a lot of controversy as well. Below, Peter Rist presents us an overview of the programming and the problems which made the event this year.

by Peter Rist



Bertrand Tavernier directing the leading actors in *Des Enfants Gâtés*

The second annual Festival International du Film de la Critique Québécoise is over, and by all accounts it was a disaster. The word "all" is an exaggeration since only the French language Montreal newspapers — *Le Devoir* and *La Presse* took it seriously. In the English speaking sector one would believe that Martin Malina, as an Anglophone critic with a real interest in Francophone culture, would have covered the event had the *Montreal Star* not been on strike. As for the audience, it never materialised.

Advance publicity was too little and too late. It was confined to a small card listing merely the titles of the films, their country of origin and the names of the directors. It is surprising that, although these schedules were distributed to a number of French language bookstores in the city, they did not appear on the advertising racks of Place des Arts, where the films were to be shown, until less than a week before the opening. No publicity at all appeared in the English media even though two of the films were in English and a number of others had English sub-titles; a fact which was not mentioned anywhere. Only four days prior to the opening of the Festival did the Saturday *La Presse* publish a brief synopsis of each film that was to appear. And yet, neither Jean-Pierre Tadros of *Le Devoir* nor Luc Perrault of *La Presse* considered that such a lack of publicity could account for the low turnout of spectators.

Given that a limited amount of promotional material did exist, even here, two potential aspects of crowd drawing power were not pushed to the full. Firstly, almost all the films were receiving their Canadian première and some, presumably, their world première; e.g., Luce Guilbeault's *D'abord ménagères* and the Canadian/Mexican co-production *Jornaleros* (in its Canadian version); further, most films were being shown for the first time in North America. Secondly, prior reception of an award or presentation at, for example, this year's Cannes Festival was not necessarily clearly disclosed. Nanni Moretti's *Ecce Bombo* was in competition at Cannes and *Les fils de Fierro* by Fernando Ezequiel Solanas had been shown as part of the same event's Quinzaine des Réalisateurs. Of the older films being shown in Canada for the first time Andrei Tarkovski's *Solaris* (1972), Krzysztof Zanussi's *Camouflage* (1976), and Dikongue-Pipa's *Muna Moto* (1974) had all won prizes. None of this was revealed in the press.

Where Perrault and Tadros were right in their newspaper epilogues was in criticising the lack of effort on the part of the organisers in somehow making the "neuf cinéma" of the program more accessible to the public. Plot synopsis does not go far enough, for example, to acquaint us with the novel structure of the films of Jean-Marie Straub. *Moses and Aaron* was shown on the second Saturday evening of the festival, and only cinéphiles acquainted with Straub's previous work were likely to even begin to approach this difficult film. However, it is certainly not the job of a program of films purporting to be "new" in some way, to present conventional or commercial fare to the public and the organisers should surely not be criticised for trying to extend horizons of taste. If, as Perrault and Tadros suggest, the Cinémathèque Québécoise, Conservatory of Cinematographic Art at Concor-

dia University, and Cinéma Parrallèle are sufficient in playing this role, then perhaps no festival is required at all in Montreal.

A big problem is, of course, that the month of August wherein many residents have fled the confines of the city, is unsuitable for one such event, let alone two. In addition, the admission price of \$3.50 to view films projected by in-experts, where sound drums are not cleaned and lenses are improperly focused, was unreasonably high. It should be pointed out here that in New York City, possibly the centre where the highest level of sophistication in audience appreciation of "new cinéma" exists, only two widely supported film festivals occur each year — The New York Film Festival at Lincoln Centre in September/October and the New Directors, New Films Series at the Museum of Modern Art in April. In total, less than 40 new feature length films were presented at the last editions of these festivals, a number that may well be exceeded by Serge Losique's upcoming World Film Festival alone. Thus, when one compares the populations of the two cities, Montreal and New York, and when one considers my previous comments, it is not surprising that only a handful of spectators attended some of the screenings at the second Festival International du Film de la Critique Québécoise. And what of the 27 feature films of the festival?

It may be instructive to play the game of discerning who selected the films, and why. In the official festival program, seven names were listed as the Administration Council, two of which, André Roy and Jean-Pierre Bastien, reappeared as part of the Organising Committee. It is certainly interesting that André Roy, President, in reviewing this year's Cannes extravaganza in *Cinéma Québec* liked only some sixteen or eighteen films of the 54 which he wrote about. All six of the films shown at Place des Arts which were also screened at Cannes, were included in the favourable third. Roy was quoted in *La Presse* as saying that only a twentieth of the two-hundred films that he viewed were retained, i.e. ten. He also claimed that at least two members of the selection committee approved each film chosen. But surely the Cannes selection was decidedly singular?

From André Roy's *Cinéma Québec* article, and from the films themselves, one can detect a strong political concern. Whether or not the films were chosen by one person, though, they were certainly interesting. Only the selection of *Ecce Bombo* faced strong criticism from the press, while Mrinal Sen's *Les Marginaux* provided a welcome addition to the sole example of Indian Cinema, evidenced by the films of Satyajit Ray. Geraldo Sarno's *Coronel Delmiro Gouveia* was a revelation from Brazil, combining his own documentary style with a theme, telling of the rise of a Brazilian entrepreneur out of the example of plantocracy — reminiscent of Leon Hirszman's *Sao Bernardo*, camera movement circling Gouveia after his rescue by the "people" — straight out of Rocha's *Antonio des Mortes*, the extraordinary sound of a squeaking ox cart from *Vidas Secas*, and, flamboyance and Brechtian distancing reminding one of the whole Cinema Nuovo movement.

In short, it is a film firmly situated in a Brazilian cinematic tradition. How refreshing it is to recognize that it is still possible for an industry to build a new style of filmmaking and for the filmmakers to continue to be able to express them-

Peter Rist is doing graduate work in Cinema studies at New York University.

selves in their medium, even politically, under an allegedly oppressive regime. What an example Brazil provides, where receipts from the box office feed the production of films.

At least five of the six films chosen from Cannes displayed a political bent (the one not previously mentioned being Robert Young's *Alambrista*), while the remaining film, Mark Rappaport's *The Scenic Route*, was decidedly an independent production, costing an amazingly low \$35,000 to make. Without knowing anything about the financial arrangements involved in bringing films to a festival I suggest here that, given André Roy's admirable intentions of ignoring the super-productions from Cannes, cost may have been a consideration in selecting films for the recent Montreal event. The fact that an older Zanussi film, *Camouflage*, was chosen rather than his latest, *Spirale*, also shown at Cannes and liked by Roy, emphasizes this possibility. Further, if it was no more expensive to show certain films over others, why did the organisers lack the foresight to include in the program such obvious crowd attractions as Oshima's *L'empire de la passion* or Marco Ferreri's *Rêve de singe*, both of which André Roy had kind words for in his *Cinéma Québec* review?

One must wonder, here, at what role other members of the two committees played, especially since Luc Perrault, as vice-president of the administration council, was himself highly critical of the film selection in his daily reviews in *La Presse*. In summary, though, I consider that the selection from Cannes, no matter how much a personal one, was extremely interesting and in keeping with the intended thematics of the critics, festival — young and independent cinema, first works, and militant films.

Against this, some doubt may be cast on the validity of including older films in a festival of "new cinema," even though the works concerned were receiving their Canadian première. One would think that the presentation of Tarkovsky's *Solaris*, Wajda's *Le bois de bouleaux* (1970), Straub and Huillet's *Moses and Aaron* and Mizoguchi's *The 47 Ronin* should more sensibly have been undertaken by the likes of the Cinémathèque Québécoise, especially when one considers the rather high admission price. However, the Mizoguchi two-part epic was questionably the best (two) film(s) in the festival. In fact, it says much about the paucity of today's cinema that one can be riveted to the drama on the screen for four hours and marvel at the sublimity of the camera movement in this Mizoguchi film, made between 1941 and 1942, a film not considered to be among his greatest works. In none of the other films that I saw at the festival was so much attention paid to every detail of set design, costuming, framing, camera angle, length of shot, etc., not to mention the delivery of dialogue which suspended belief to the very end in the control and discipline of the Samurai order which once existed in Japan.

The African films, if not of the cinematic quality of the Brazilian entry, proved to be as revealing. If there was a certain amount of disappointment at Sembene's *Ceddo* not being shown as originally scheduled, this was made up in no small measure by a departure in style, exhibited in all three films, from the Ousmane Sembene inspired, slow, careful observation of African traditions and their clash with Western culture. While Moussa Bathily's *Circumcision* (Senegal), stayed within the thematic mainstream of his country's cinema, it was graced with a faster editing style, an interesting point of view outer structure of three young boys, and

an occasionally ironic, "colonial" narration in a Western language — French. If the acting of the young boys watching the circumcision ceremony seemed strained at times, this may be validated somewhat by a general stylisation in the film enabling it to be simultaneously educational and entertaining. Souleymane Cisse's *Baara*, from Mali, displayed a greater break from the Senegalese style both thematically, in concentrating on urban, westernised African bourgeoisie, and texturally, combining classic, parallel montage with a neo-realist extension of observation of incidents (rather than a single narrative flow). While the film may have been ultimately floored by a Hollywood TV inspired ending of high melodrama and some implausible characterisation, the editing was tightly controlled and the details of social behaviour well observed. The *Ceddo* replacement, *Muna Moto* by Jean-Pierre Dikongue-Pipa from Cameroun was made a few years ago. Here the melodrama centred on tribal marriage customs, specifically of the Dot or Dowry, and was hilarious rather than serious for many of the audience.

Since the outer flashback structure and slow motion lyricism seemed somewhat dated, the stylised behaviour of the characters could also appear to be unintentional, and a crucial flaw in the film — and yet this exaggeration, reminiscent of de Andrade's *Macunaima* from Brazil, could conceivably work to the film's advantage in adding weight to its critical thrust. Also, in hardly moving out of the jungle, the film stands as having the most visually-compelling, tropical decor since the aforementioned *Macunaima*.

Where the festival fell apart at the seams was in its selection of five films from France and three from Switzerland. While the African choices could well be attributed to André Roy, since they seem to fit the political, critical, and Third World interests shown in the Cannes selections, I doubt that the same person(s) selected these European films. Perhaps Janine Euvrard, on the committee and stationed in Paris, was largely responsible. Although a thread of pessimism as a thematic ran through the entire film festival, nothing could match the alienation and utter aimless and bored approach to life shown in most of the new French and Swiss films. Their similarities were remarkable and suggest a singular and incestuous selection.

David Overby, writing recently in *Sight & Sound*, believes that we are in the midst of a New Wave of French Cinéma. He cited the names of thirteen new filmmakers as those "which come immediately to mind" and which "indicate the burgeoning richness and diversity of new French Cinéma." Among the names were those of Benoit Jacquot, Bertrand Tavernier, Paul Vecchiali and Jean-Claude Biette, who between them directed the five French films shown at the festival. Perhaps only Vecchiali came out with his reputation intact, whereas Jacquot was positively despised by critics and audiences alike. If form should fit content in a work of art then perhaps Benoit Jacquot is an artist. The visual emptiness of his work perfectly matched the lack of any kind of development of narrative or theme. I was incredulous, sitting through *Les Enfants du Placard*, certain that something was surely going to happen, some insight be given into the reasons for the main character's total listlessness and alienation, wondering at the proliferation of the low key lighting in the film and the play on the colors red and blue and waiting for these stylistic elements to be threaded into a meaningful



Randy Danson and Marilyn Jones play two sisters involved in an incestuous triangle with a man in Rappaport's *The Scenic Route*

whole with the drama. But the film ended more vacuous than it began, standing as a testament to the pseudo-intellectuality of a new breed of French (and Swiss) filmmakers who are managing to say nothing either dramatically or purely visually that hasn't already been said much more profoundly by Antonioni, Warhol, Fassbinder, Chantal Ackerman et al.

It is obvious, of course that the festival suffered through its insistence on showing French language films. When one considers that eight of the thirteen new French films shown at Cannes in the "Perspectives" section had already been shown at the Conservatory of Cinematographic Art earlier this year and that new films from France with a commercial potential have been, or shortly will be, snapped up by distributors in Quebec, then the remaining choices must necessarily be limited. The selection of as many as three films from Switzerland is perhaps more deserving of sympathy in the light of the exciting example forged by Alain Tanner, Claude Goretta and Michel Soutter in recent years. As for the incestuousness I suggested earlier — three examples will suffice — Paul Vecchiali (*La Machine*) produced Biette's first film (*Le Théâtre des Matières*) and Patricia Moraz (*Les Indiens Sont Encore Loin*) assisted Francis Reusser (*Le Grand Soir*) on a number of his films. Whereas a stated intention of the critics' festival of promoting new and independent filmmakers can perhaps vindicate all of the above selections, surely no justification can be given for showing in a 27 film exhibit both

of the two first feature films made by one man, in this case Benoit Jacquot.

What a tragedy it is that Quebec films were not available to fill a gap that should have been vacated by some of the overloaded French/Swiss representation. Only one full length Quebec film, *D'abord ménagères* was shown, on the last day of the festival, and this to a near full house, for a documentary no less. In the month of June at New York's Museum of Modern Art a retrospective of Quebec cinéma, post *Mon Oncle Antoine*, was presented. Tom Allen of the *Village Voice* wrote "It is one of the most pleasant and powerful surprises of the year — with its diversity and tensions, individuality and common political awareness, Cinéma Québécois emerges as the most important film movement since the first gleanings of the New German Cinéma." While Quebec's films may have been elevated here above their deserved status, this statement is poignant in making us realise that they have just not received the kind of distribution in their own time that they deserved. Consequently, the "movement" is virtually over, the depleting funds having expired. In an era of exciting change and optimism, Quebec filmmakers are not able to express in their own medium the dynamism which currently exists in the region. Instead they must be dragged deeper into the mire through the pessimism of others in Quebec's cinematic milieu, the critics, transferring this mood onto the screen by way of the films of more fortunate French speaking compatriots who have less to say but at least a little money to say it with. *C'est la vie!!!*

some 16 mm filmmakers from toronto

special section



Atop the CN Tower as seen by Westminster Films Ltd

Despite all the sound and fury revolving around Canada's attempt to break into the international feature film market, the backbone of the industry remains the 16mm producer and filmmaker.

He is the fellow who makes the commercial, turns out the sponsored films our children see in school (when, that is, they see Canadian films). Increasingly, he is making films for television. He is the fellow who does the daily job, who employs and trains the technicians who later go on to longer and more prestigious films. He is also the fellow who competes with the National Film Board of Canada and with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for his piece of the pie.

The following group of articles presents the Canadian Film and Television Association, the group to which many 16mm producers belong, and introduces some of the filmmakers working in Toronto.

30 and going strong

Thirty years is a long time for a producers' association to hold together. Even more unusual is to see a mature association take on new strength and tackle old problems in fresh ways. The Canadian Film and Television Association is just such an association, as Patricia Thompson tells us below.

by Patricia Thompson

Thirty years ago — way back in 1948 — the AMPLC (Association of Motion Picture Producers and Laboratories of Canada) came into being, and then, in 1974, changed its name to the Canadian Film and Television Association. Forging ahead this year, a March meeting approved a re-organization.

The CFTA is “dedicated to promoting the common interests of those engaged in the motion picture and videotape production and laboratory industries in Canada by maintaining the highest possible standards in producing for industrial, theatrical or television release.” It also represents the industry in its relations with government, other associations, and the public at large.

To accomplish its aims and cover such a wide spectrum, the CFTA has ten far-reaching Divisions. Production (Tape and Film) has six areas — Sponsored Production, Theatrical Production, Commercials (TV and Theatrical), TV Programming and Educational, Animation, and Audio-Video. Productions Services covers Laboratories & Optical Houses plus Sound Studios, Post Production (Film & Tape), with Distributors & Suppliers and Supplies & Equipment making up the total. Each Division has a Chairman. Standing Committees are established as needed, i.e. Industrial Relations, Taxation & Duty Laws, Publicity, which can cut across the activities of all or several of the Divisions.

Patricia Thompson is the editor of the Canadian Film Digest Year Book, was director of the Canadian Film Awards for two years and loves film.

CFTA membership is now in two categories. Active Members (including suppliers and laboratories) pay a sliding scale of fees depending upon a company's gross annual sales. The six-step fee scale has a minimum of \$150 per annum, rising to a maximum of \$1,500. Affiliate Members are those largely retired from the industry who maintain their interest in, and support of, the Association for \$35 a year.

John Teeter, the charmingly urbane General Manager of the CFTA, was buttonholed on the eve of leaving town in late July. The 1978 Convention was being held in Edmonton in conjunction with the Commonwealth International Film Festival (the Commonwealth Games being a sidebar event, of course....).

He was asked to reflect upon the CFTA and its influence and scope in the field of 16mm filmmaking and videotape and was, as always, obliging.

“To say our organization is nationalistic is not a fair statement. We agree with many of the views of ACTRA, the CFEG, and so on, and subscribe to the points system for the definition of a Canadian film. However, we cannot rule out the necessity, from time to time, of being able to bring in foreigners for supporting roles, special effects, and other aspects. We believe strongly in the future and capability of the industry.”

Teeter went on to stress that the CFTA is aiming at better service to its members across the country, while admitting that there are certain difficulties relating to Quebec and to the

West. Maintaining and increasing membership in Quebec isn't easy, where it is a recognized necessity for Quebecers to join the provincial industry organizations. However, campaigning engenders reasonable hope that the CFTA membership will stabilize in the province. Arthur Chetwynd recently toured the West from Winnipeg to Victoria, and there is no use denying that it feels cut off, especially as the bulk of industrial activity is in Ontario.

The next step, according to Teeter, is to translate some of the Divisions into regional sub-groupings in order that better, nationwide service to members becomes a reality.

Further CFTA remodelling is evidenced by the expansion of its 1978 Awards. A luncheon function for five years since sponsored films were separated from the Canadian Film Awards, this year's Awards will span a goodly portion of Friday, October 27. The Sheraton Centre Cinema 2 in Toronto is booked for screenings during the afternoon, to be followed by a Dinner and presentation of the Awards at the adjoining Sheraton Centre Hotel. Dave Broadfoot is confirmed as M.C.

So — the CFTA looks OK kid this year. Sure, there's always the ongoing battle with CBC for better air time, better prices, higher allocation of its dollar to the private sector — and the same applying to NFB. But John Teeter is exuding quiet confidence these days, and beaming affably when talking about the CFTA's strenuous attempts to be supportive and visible, not just in Ontario, but right across the country.

precarious establishment

Jaan Pill talked with some of the older hands in Toronto, and gives us a thumb-nail sketch of some of the companies, the projects and the preoccupations of these 16mm filmmakers.

by Jaan Pill

What does it take to survive as an independent producer in Canada's non-theatrical industry?

The answer that kept recurring among the independent producers I spoke to — both those featured here and ones left out of this survey because of space limitations — is that for the independent, the film business is first of all a business. And survival in that business simply means success at selling your services, products and ideas. Period.

Many of the producers originally had their start with CBC or NFB, where the requirements for survival are usually of a vastly different order. When you're on a government payroll your salary often has no direct relation to productivity as measured by your products. And your production costs often don't have a direct relation to your film's selling price.

One issue that came up over and over was the Film Board's pricing policies for its educational films. The Board argues that it has cornered only 10 per cent of the largely American-dominated education and library market — and that it's opening up the market for Canadian producers by selling its products cheaply. But many independents, such as Insight's, Pen Densham, argue that as a private entrepreneur you can develop a production that happens to parallel a Board pro-

duction — and then find that the Board sells film at a third of your own selling price. "The American competition," he says, "at least is a healthy competition, in that it's going at the same prices."

Another issue is the Board's control of government sponsored films. While the independents speak highly of the efforts that Walford (Wally) Hewitson of the Sponsored Programme Division has made to improve relations between the two sectors on this issue, many of them also call for legislation — such as deletion of clauses 9 and 11 from the National Film Act — to further decrease the NFB monopoly. As Graeme Fraser of Crawleys points out, the film medium could be sold much more widely to government departments if the Board didn't stand in the way.

The immediate concern of most producers, however, is the CBC, whose \$500-million budget dwarfs the Film Board's budget under \$50-million.

The independents — through the revitalized Canadian Film and Television Association increasingly acting as one voice that speaks for the entire industry — are pushing for a vastly improved deal for the taxpayer by requiring the CBC to buy instead of make their own productions — and they're making their point with a sales presentation in the form of a unique film directed at senior decision-makers in Ottawa.

Jaan Pill is a free-lance writer and artist who lives in Toronto.

Jaan Pill

Crawley Films Limited was founded by Frank Radford ('Budge') Crawley in Ottawa in 1939.

Crawley Films has now made over 2500 films including sponsored films for just about everybody and also features as well as 700 commercials and promos. And it has won over 200 national and world awards including an Oscar (1976) for *The Man Who Skied Down Everest*.



The parachute opens in Crawley's *The Man Who Skied Down Everest*

Also, Crawley Films is a member of 'IQ' – International Quorum of Motion Picture Producers – an association of major international producers, who use each others' services when producing outside their home countries. Crawley's vice president Graeme Fraser is an IQ past president.

Of CBC, Crawley notes that "They're subsidized 500 million dollars a year. Nobody knows how it's really deployed. They're just absolutely hagridden with overhead." The solution, he says, would be to cut the budget in half. "The programs would be better. They've got such an overhead of useless people. That's their trouble. It's empire building like you wouldn't believe."

Chetwynd Films Limited was founded in 1950 by Arthur Chetwynd, who till then had been teaching physical and health education at the University of Toronto.

The company's first productions were coaching, educational and Red Cross films, followed by several years of childrens' shows for CBC.

Chetwynd Films made football films for Big Four football teams until 10 years ago, has made Grey Cup films since 1947, and films for the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede since 1952.

Sports films make up a third of the business. Also accident prevention, medical films and lots of travel films are



photo: Chetwynd Films

Grand Prix Canada 1967: Robert Brooks CSC, at that time Chetwynd Film's Photography Director (and now President of Robert Brooks Associates) gives instructions to Jack Brabham on the operation of Chetwynd's helmet camera.

produced. Over 3000 films all told to date have been made.

Chetwynd stresses that the non-theatrical business is "a communications business, pure and simple" – which explains, for example, why the company is involved with things like the Canadian Schenley football awards, where it stages a two-hour show combining film, live music and speeches.

And finally Chetwynd Films is very much a family company – employing Arthur Chetwynd, his wife Marjory and son Robin (who's now the owner and president).

Westminster Films Limited has been in business since 1958 and has made strictly sponsored drama, industrial and documentary films. "Name it, we've done it," says production coordinator Margaret Beadle.

It has also produced slides and multi-screen productions, such as the 6 1/2 hour communications seminar show for Bell Canada.

Don Haldane and Lee Gordon are the two owners. Haldane is currently coordinating the Discovery Train (for the NFB), a special train sponsored by the National Museums and comprised of ten museum cars depicting scenes from Canadian history that will travel across Canada for the next five years.

Haldane is Westminster's president. Lee Gordon, who both directs and produces, serves as executive vice-president. Also Keith Harley does model animation and special effects.

Westminster has six permanent staff members plus freelance technicians and cameramen. It has always been a medium-sized film house. Gordon and Haldane prefer its size to that of an expanding company, as it allows them to be personally involved with each project.

Quinn Laboratories Limited was started in 1968 by Findlay Quinn who had his start in 1946 when he joined the Film Board. In the war he served as an RCAF squadron gunnery officer who used films for training and as a result became interested in filmmaking.

In 1957 he left the Board to run Transworld Film Labs in Montreal.

Around this time it happened that Bob Crone, a producer, director, cameraman, soundman in Toronto, was regularly sending work to Montreal. Crone decided to form a service

unit and contacted Quinn for the lab and Len Green for sound division. The result was Film House.

Some years later, both Quinn and Green left, and Quinn started Quinn Labs. (Green now runs the NFB sound division.)



Findlay J. Quinn

The sound division of Quinn Labs — Mirrophonic Sound — was started in 1974. Quinn is president of Canadian Film and Television Association and has had a major role in its revitalization. (He credits his predecessors Harold Eady and Gunter Henning for getting the ball rolling.)

I asked Quinn for an estimate on annual dollar volume for the industry. He put it at \$100 million for all the projects that CFTA covers. He says that features are about 25 per cent of dollar volume. Estimates from other sources were in the same range.

During the preparation of this issue of Cinema Canada, Quinn Labs were sold to Film House. We chose not to edit the copy but to let it stand, a tribute to Finn Quinn and his contribution to the industry. Ed.

KEG Productions Limited

KEG, started in 1964, is named after the three principal shareholders — G.S. Kedey, Ralph Ellis and Dan Gibson.

KEG's TV wildlife series — **Audubon Wildlife Theater** — has never been off the air since 1969. The series, which has been shown in about 40 countries, was financed through presales based on pilots.

KEG also produced **Wildlife Cinema**, another wildlife series for TV, along with **To The Wild Country** — and a feature film, **Wings of the Wilderness**.

Ralph Ellis serves as KEG's executive producer. Like Arthur Chetwynd and Findlay Quinn at the end of World War II, he went directly from RCAF into the film business. And like Quinn, he began with the Film Board. He stayed on for

8 1/2 years, ending up in New York as the Board's United States sales distribution manager.

After leaving NFB he founded Freemantle of Canada Limited, an international distribution company in Toronto, whose holdings he sold 7 years later.

Right now KEG is relatively dormant. In 1968 Ellis had formed a production company, Manitou Productions Limited, for **Adventures in Rainbow Country**, a dramatic series for children. He presold the series in England, Australia and Canada on a presentation basis to get the money to produce it.



Dan Gibson with his nature family in KEG Productions' feature film **Wings in the Wilderness**

Ellis reactivating Manitou to co-produce with CBC **Wild Canada**, a series of 13 hour-long TV specials to run for a four year period, starring John and Janet Foster, Dan Gibson's producer on the series.

Along with Manitou, Ellis has a distribution company, Ralph C. Ellis Enterprises Limited, that brings TV series such as **Upstairs, Downstairs** into Canada.

●
International Cinemedia Center Limited began in Montreal in 1969 when Joseph Koenig, John Kemeny and George Kaczender left the National Film Board.

Koenig says that before he joined the Board in the early '50s, he was a reporter for some trade papers in Montreal. He began as a writer for NFB educational film strips, then moved to educational films.

Looking back, he's pleased he had to make a living on the outside before he went to work for the Board.

"A lot of people didn't and still don't have that experience and it's a serious — a very serious — problem."

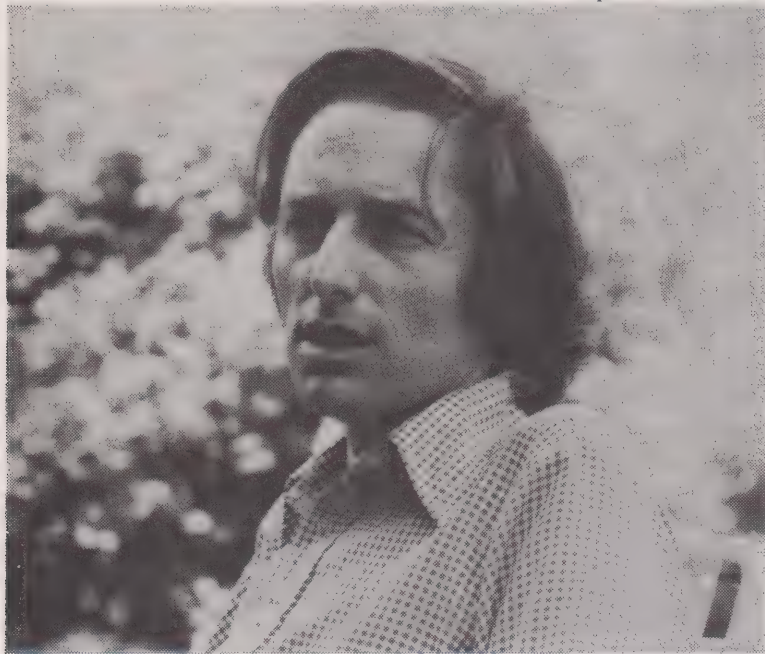
At the Board, Koenig directed films like **Origins of Weather** and **Climates of North America**, both of which gained widespread popularity.

Among the films he produced were **Cosmic Zoom** and **Imperial Sunset**.

International Cinemedia has made sponsored films as well as features including **The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz** and **White Line Fever** (a successful movie "about truckers for Columbia in which "All the good guys have funny names and don't wear ties and all the bad guys wear ties, speak good English and have paintings on their walls.")

Koenig stresses that his company's first job is to sell communication. For example much of its educational work involves 35 mm film strips. "We've found it's very important," Koenig says, "because the market for 16mm films... has simply dried up."

photo: Jaan Pill



Joseph Koenig's first job is to "sell communications"

They've moved into the print (as in paper and ink) medium too. "We've got to provide communication stuff. We can't just be movie makers. We find that's not what people want to buy. They want to buy a service."

The company moved its head office to Toronto in 1977. Kemeny, who is its president, is in Los Angeles concentrating on features.

Insight Productions was launched by John Watson and Pen Densham in 1970 with a series of fillers for CBC.

They've recently produced several TV specials including *Toller*, *World of Wizards* and *Stallone*, *The Million-to-One Shot*.



John Watson, Malcolm Bricklin and Pen Densham during an Insight shoot

The latter film resulted from Densham's stint as 'intern' to Norman Jewison in Hollywood on *F.I.S.T.*, the feature starring Sylvester Stallone.

Insight divided the past year between Toronto and Hollywood — where Universal hired it to do a documentary on Stallone's new feature, *Paradise Alley*. Instead of using interviews with actors, Insight wrote lines which the characters deliver as if they were actually stepping out of the film for a moment to talk to the audience.

Impressed with the results, Universal then hired the company to do the feature's product reel and trailers.

Insight finds such projects "an ideal opportunity to discover the inner workings of a successful major films corporation."

Recently, Insight cut back on staff and production in Toronto — to ensure that they stay personally involved with each film instead of becoming a film factory. As well, they want to concentrate on projects pointed toward international-sale TV specials and features.

Concerning the National Film Board, Densham says that independents working for them are learning to please producers, when they really should be out learning to please audiences.

Nelvana Limited was formed in 1971; the principals are Patrick Loubert, Clive Smith and Michael Hirsch.

As result of the success of its animated TV special *A Cosmic Christmas*, Nelvana is now moving along with *The Devil and Daniel Mouse*, which will run on CBC and Radio-Canada and on the same American stations that carried *Cosmic*.



Weez Weezel wields a gavel while Beezlebub promotes rock 'n roll in Nelvana's new TV special, *The Devil and Daniel Mouse*

As well, George Lucas has selected Nelvana to do the first animation of several *Star War* characters — 10 minutes of animation for a 90-minute TV special produced in Los Angeles.

And it has received a script-development grant from CFDC for an animated feature.

Meanwhile Nelvana continues with live-action industrial and educational films and a series of half-hour family entertainment documentaries.

up and coming

Patricia Thompson chatted with a few of the people in the newer film companies in Toronto, and gives us a glimpse of their goings-on.

by Patricia Thompson



Paul Saltzman aboard ship in Zanzibar shooting *Journey From Zanzibar* for the "Spread Your Wings" Series

Let's muse for a moment on the astronomical expense of producing a 35mm feature film skyrocketing cinema admission prices, brought about by escalating costs of wages, equipment, upkeep, repairs — not to mention pricey popcorn and pop and distributors with outrageously greedy demands. One is tempted to predict a new "trend" towards the more economical 16mm film being used within the commercial framework.

Canada has an enviable world reputation for 16mm documentaries, via Grierson and the National Film Board. Young filmmakers, eyes sparkle with dreams of feature films cannot, these days, really hope to 'practise' on 35mm.

Speaking as a veteran film society organizer and a member of the trio who started the Ontario Film Institute and Theatre, good 16mm facilities, intelligently used, can rate with 35mm in the smaller, intimate cinema. At the Ontario Film Theatre in the Science Centre, Toronto, I often turn and check the booth to find out if the superb image on the screen is 35mm or 16mm.

The following small sampling of 16mm filmmakers, alive and well in Toronto, serves to display them — gutsy, feisty, professional — lots of energetic survivors, all more than ready to take up a challenge.

Patricia Thompson

Bill Dunn of Artistic Productions — interviewed in his coach house studio/residence — had an orange visor clamped to his brow proclaiming “Nude Florida Pageant.” Don’t be fooled — he’s not in the porn business!

His partner is Tom Taylor, formerly an illustrator, and their company has been around for eight years. Bill started in advertising and photography, and continues to maintain a business association and *rapprochement* with clients from those days.

Artistic Productions makes sponsored films. Recent ones were for Hertz, Sangamo and Famous Players: also commercials shot in 16mm (contrary to the usual practice around town) which are edited on film and released on two-inch tape only.

“We always have script approval and we are not in any film unless we own part of it,” says Bill firmly.

For the past month or so, success seems to be coming at them: a network sale to CBC for one telecast of **Normandy Dream** on November 11 this year, a distributor in Munich, for European deals, who has a contact in Canada; and a



Scene from a Schwarzkopf commercial, *La Méthode*, produced by Artistic Productions

separate approach to the BBC any minute now. “We’ve got 2 1/2 hours of programming altogether — including **Street Music** and **The Game...** all the films we’ve made have always sold in Canada, sometimes to both the English and French TV networks, plus print sales.”

Normandy Dream is the first of a mini-series of war stories relating to the *individual* rather than the history. The second is about a Spitfire pilot, is pre-produced, and at the ‘talking to investors’ stage. They’ve just finished a 90-minute, 16mm feature, in color, with Burg Productions and Tony Kramreither, working title *Nude World*.

Bill Dunn joined associations “when I was young” for education purposes, but is convinced that, to be any good, you have to break away from the basics and do what *you* want to do. “I’m still a member of CSC (Canadian Society of Cinematographers) where I meet people in my own craft.”

He is also convinced that 16mm filmmakers shouldn’t be tame! “I had to call Al Johnson in Ottawa to get the CBC contract for **Normandy Dream**. You have to do anything — talk back, go over people’s heads.”

●
Sunrise Films makes people-oriented documentaries. A prime example is **At 99: A Portrait of Louise Tandy Murch**,

winner of a Canadian Film Award in 1975 and a Red Ribbon at the American Film Festival. “We’ve never made a sponsored film, and we don’t want to,” says Deepa Saltzman, who directs, writes, works on sound — and is now learning camera.

The company’s films are made by three, or so, people. A small working group is best for them. Everyone knows his/her job and does it without interference from the others. After five years in business, Deepa says with pride that documentaries such as **What’s the Weather Like Up There?**, **To Be a Clown** and **Indira Ghandi: State of Power**, sell to TV around the world, and in the educational print market. With two distributors in the U.S., one handling print sales and the other TV rights, the company is busy all the time and “moderately successful.”

In Canada, the company projects are offered to and discussed with CBC, and usually accepted. Distribution and sales here are handled by Viking Films.



Paul and Deepa Saltzman on location in Florida to shoot the *Spread Your Wings* Series

Sunrise’s big undertaking is a series of 13 films for children in the 10-16 age group, and nine are already completed. Filmed all over the world, these docu-dramas show a child learning a craft and a tradition, and relating to friends, family life and the instructor, with narration by a child. These CBC co-productions, to be shown on the English and French networks, cover countries and crafts from Chartres, France (stained glass), Germany, (violin making), Peru (gourd carving) and to India (carpet making).

The Sunrise group is now filming in South East Asia — Japan, Bali, Singapore, Thailand. Be a 16mm filmmaker and cover the world!

To talk to **Cabbageroll Productions** is to meet with Clay Borris, his partner John Phillips, and *entourage* — Clay's aunt, Pauline Maltais, and *protégé* Doris — all crammed around a tiny table in a downtown Greek sidewalk café on an extremely warm day.

Clay Borris and John Phillips have been in business since 1969 and, as John puts it, "I would say we are not financially successful — but artistically, yes."



John Phillips mans the camera while Clay and Julia Borris handle the sound equipment during the shoot of *One Hand Clapping*

The company's 'take notice' film is *Rose's House*, a study of, and tribute to, Clay's redoubtable mother, and his relatives — "people tell me I'm obsessed with my family." It was sold outright for \$30,000 to the National Film Board, who furnished post production. But, as Clay says, "The film cost \$34,000 to make, including money from The Canada Council, and no one got paid for acting, so it was about an \$80,000/\$90,000 film really."

Clay and John spent two years (1975-77) at Browndale, a treatment centre for emotionally disturbed children. With Clay directing and John as cameraman (their favorite mode of working) they travelled around Ontario to about 60 houses where up to five children are housed in small "treatment" groups, and made eight half-hour training and publicity films for the organization.

"The Odd Couple," as Clay insists they are known, have written a feature film script with Steve Klys — *Gift of Gab*. It's in the hands of Don Haig at Film Arts, for consideration by

Allan King when he has a reading space. Planned as a 16mm feature in color, the terrible twins are thinking positively about starting a shooting by the end of the year.

According to David Springbett's wife and partner, Heather MacAndrew, **Asterisk Film & Videotape Productions** is a company specializing in international development themes — Third World countries and foreign aid, UNICEF, OXFAM, developing countries and developing ideas.

This specific interest has its roots in Bolivia in 1973, where David crewed on a BBC/OXFAM production. It led to India in 1974 with the same combination, and then to work with OXFAM in the U.S. for a couple of years.

David then raised the money, produced and directed *Guatemala Camp Vivo* around Christmas 1976. It was aired on CBC's *Man Alive* during 1977.

All a far cry from David's start with *And No Birds Sing*, made at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg in 1968. Of Fond memory, the film trickled gently around the film society circuit, and aroused a minor flurry of publicity and interest.

The latest twist in the Springbett career came a few weeks ago when the National Film Board offered him a one-year contract as Regional Producer, Ontario Region — formerly Beryl Fox's *niche*.

Heather MacAndrew Springbett is continuing to run Asterisk, and the company has several proposals lodged with various levels of government. "We'll just see what happens during the year of David's contract."

Gunter Oldenburg's company, **Complete Film Services**, specializes in commercials. About 90 percent, in fact, plus a few industrial films designed to show off clients' products and businesses.

Only about 25 percent of the shooting is in 16mm, so perhaps Gunter doesn't strictly fit in here, but he's been the CFTA representative on the Committee of the Canadian Film Awards for 1977 and 1978. A dedicated member of the Judging Group in 1977, his expertise (and staying power!) was of great value in the craft judging, where the majority of entries are on 16mm.

In business for seven years, with four employees (including himself), plus free lancers when needed, Gunter assesses his venture as "medium-stable" since its start.

Contacts are really important. Business is nearly all through Canadian agencies, with about 15 percent in the U.S. We use Canadian talent mostly — except perhaps for a special spokesman identified with a brand or trade name. However, sometimes a client fixes on a particular 'face' which may be U.S."

Recently, in a small breathing space between assignments, Gunter Oldenburg announced an agreement between Complete Film Services and a British company, Cinema of The Seventies. His company will supply facilities and assistance with contractual negotiations with Canadian union artists, for not less than three features to be announced soon. Cinema of The Seventies is headed by Roy Millichip, an independent producer/writer whose feature credits include producer and co-producer respectively of *I Was Happy Here* and *Smashing Time*.

the independent: a real alternative to cbc

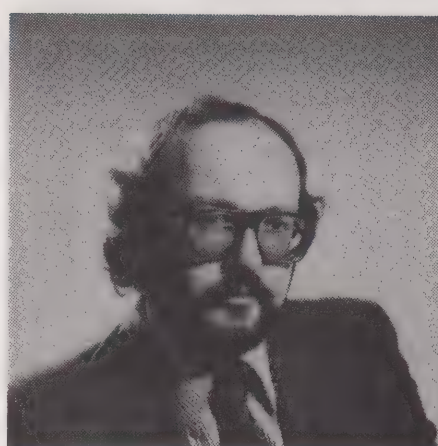
Among the ardent believers in the ability of private enterprise to do what the government agencies are now doing in film are Messrs. Nielsen and Ferns. Having solved the cash-flow problem which so plagues independent producers, they are ready to take on the CBC.

by Paul Kelman



"Since 1950, the Canadian taxpayer has spent five billion dollars for the CBC and the NFB... It's incredible to have spent that amount of money and not have anything that the world recognizes as fine!"

— Richard Nielsen (President of NFI)



"We're probably the leading supplier of film material in the country. I'm not sure if we're perceived as that, but I think we ought to be."

— Pat Ferns (Vice-President of NFI)

It's nearly ten years ago, since Richard Nielsen, then executive producer of the public affairs program *CBC Weekend*, received a trans-Atlantic call from a young Cambridge graduate, Pat Ferns, asking for work. Two months later Ferns was directing film for Nielsen. Within five years, Ferns was a senior producer to Nielsen and the two of them were "plotting" their "escape" from the CBC.

In 1972, their escape made good, they formed a Toronto based film production company, Nielsen-Ferns Ltd., a subsidiary of a Montreal facilities house, Inter-Video. Their first project was *A Third Testament*, a six part series of hour long films with Malcolm Muggeridge, on Christianity, and it was telecast by the CBC, BBC and PBS Networks. In 1976, the Montreal outfit wanted to go solo and separated. The Toronto

company then sold eighty-percent of its ownership to the Torstar Corporation and became Nielsen-Ferns Inc. (NFI). Since then, it has produced one-hundred and sixty-four productions, including five major series this year.

NFI is primarily a production house whose orientation is towards television and, as such, deals in the international market.

Ferns explains, "We decided, when we left the CBC, that we wanted to work with more money not less. In order to get more money it meant we had to go to the international marketplace, which meant you had to meet international standards, and I think that's one of the things the company has consistently done."

At present, NFI can develop a project, find finances for and manage both its production and distribution. Says Nielsen, "As a company we're different than other companies. We sell the Canadian industry's production resources. We're developing management services. The significance for the industry is that it is an area that tends to be neglected."



This Nielsen-Ferns production, *An Ark for Our Times*

"We see ourselves as a company that is a benefit to other companies. In a sense, we're a service. We'd like to define ourselves in two ways. One by the programs we do and another by the people we have assembled. We cover a broad range of programming and we are looking for other ways to broaden the spectrum. From a documentary base we have moved into sponsored films, corporate and industrial films and into the television area which we regard as the mainstream of our business, from there into wildlife series into music programs, variety, drama and now we are looking at piloting a new situation-comedy and are interested in movies for television," says Ferns.

Last year, NFI's gross production volume was between four to five million dollars (that's cost). Nielsen clarifies, "We earn our money in two ways, in production fees and on the returns of ownership (thirty to fifty percent)." It's big business.

A concerned Ferns point out, "I think that it is important that if we are really going to build an independent production industry in this country, that, in fact, we behave as hard

headed businessmen. Otherwise we are not going to survive. It is a very difficult environment in which to function.

"We are an industry that is very heavily regulated and we are in a very competitive marketplace internationally and a rather difficult market domestically, because your main purchasers are the CBC and to a much lesser extent, CTV and Global, and some of the educational networks. There aren't a lot of outlets, not enough airtime for the independent producer."

Nielsen agrees, "We found the state of the film industry in Canada required more concentration in the business than we would have wanted... The danger you get into as an independent is that people want your services. You can be a free lancer but you can not produce a series because you go to the bank and they want to know what you've got, a house and a car... If you say you are going to deliver seven or ten programs, they want to know you have the resources."

NFI's financial credibility increased dramatically when it was acquired by the Torstar Corporation. Torstar ("one-hundred percent Canadian") is a holding company which was formed when the *Toronto Star* decided that it should diversify into other areas of communications. The newspaper is now a subsidiary of Torstar whose other holdings include Harlequin Enterprises (the publishers of romance novels), various magazines and regional newspapers (through Metrospan). It is now in the film business and is also acquiring a significant position in Western broadcasting. Beland Honderich, who is chairman of the board of directors and publisher of the *Star*, sits on the board of directors for NFI along with *Star* president, Bill Dimma, and Roy McGary (McGary has just been named publisher of the *Globe and Mail* and will be leaving NFI's Board and Torstar). Nielsen and Ferns are the other two directors with twenty-percent ownership.

When asked about the Torstar acquisition, Ferns explained, "We were looking for them at the point that they were looking for us. The marriage made a lot of sense. In 1976 they acquired a majority interest, certain of the predecessor company's being assets the productions that Dick and I were doing out of Toronto.

"One of the misconceptions because of our association with Torstar is that we are, in fact, financed. We aren't, we have to go out and find all our own money."

Nielsen adds, "Torstar is not a direct investor. It supplies a certain amount of money for development and manages cash flow."

"The normal route, when we have something we want to produce," continues Ferns, "is that we either go and find a co-producer who will put up some of the money, or we make a presale to a network which provides some of the money, or go to independent investors."

With the *Third Testament* series, financing came from the CBC (one third), Time-Life Inc. (one third), Société Radio-Canada (one sixth, for a French version), and the remainder from Noranda Mines who was brought in as a sponsor. The determining factor as to whether a project is taken on, then, is whether or not money can be found for it, either in presale or investment.

Does Torstar give any editorial direction to NFI productions? According to both Nielsen and Ferns, there is "no editorial interference" Torstar, being "a sympathetic environment" in which to do business, keeping a guardian eye towards spending the money wisely.

Paul Kelman is a Toronto based actor, director and writer who has worked in the Canadian theatre and film industry since 1969.

The major reason for NFI's focus on television production is that they want to reach "as broad a market as possible". This means then that the American market is very important to the company. Ferns elaborates, "One of the things Canadians should recognize is that they should not look at the giants south of the border as something to fear but as an opportunity. We're sitting next to the largest marketplace in the world. Virtually half of the television market in the world is the U.S.! It is very difficult to get programming into the U.S. networks, but, through syndication, through underwriting with PBS etcetera, you can get very good dollars out of the American market. It is important that the Canadian industry reaches a large market."

Apparently the U.S. thinks so too. NFI has recently completed a thirteen part, half-hour series entitled *Portraits of Power* (critical portraits of Hitler, Stalin, Roosevelt, Churchill, de Gaulle and Mao Tse-Tung) with *The New York Times*, narrated by Henry Fonda.

photo: Christopher Darling



Karen Kain and Frank Augustyn star in *Ballerina*

Ferns recounts, "This was a case of journalistic expertise the *Times* looking for the best documentary producer they could find, and we felt very pleased that they turned to us. I'm going to New York tomorrow to negotiate another thirteen programs."

In addition, the company boasts that the majority of NFI productions are "entirely Canadian" with ninety-nine percent of its programs in the past few years satisfying the CRTC regulations as "Canadian content." This does not mean, however, that the subject matter, nor on-screen talent, need necessarily always be Canadian.

Explains Ferns, "We've made a commitment to Canada. We are producing here. We are going to use the talents that are available here. We feel with *The Newcomers/Les Arrivants* series (CBC) that we proved we can produce drama as well as anyone in the world. However, you have to be realistic. If you have investors who are putting money up for a series, are they going to get a return?"

"On the *New York Times* series, clearly, the *Times*, is one of the reasons that it is going to be sold. Also, when someone is looking in the *TV Guide*, all they are going to see is *Portraits of Power: Hitler*, narrated by Henry Fonda, which will be important from a rating standpoint. I think it is important that we generate some successes in this country."

Other more uniquely Canadian successes have included the series on Canadian Naturalist Al Oeming and a one hour portrait of **Karen Kain: Ballerina**, which was shown on the BBC and described by the *Observer* as "the best program on the BBC that Christmas," says Ferns.

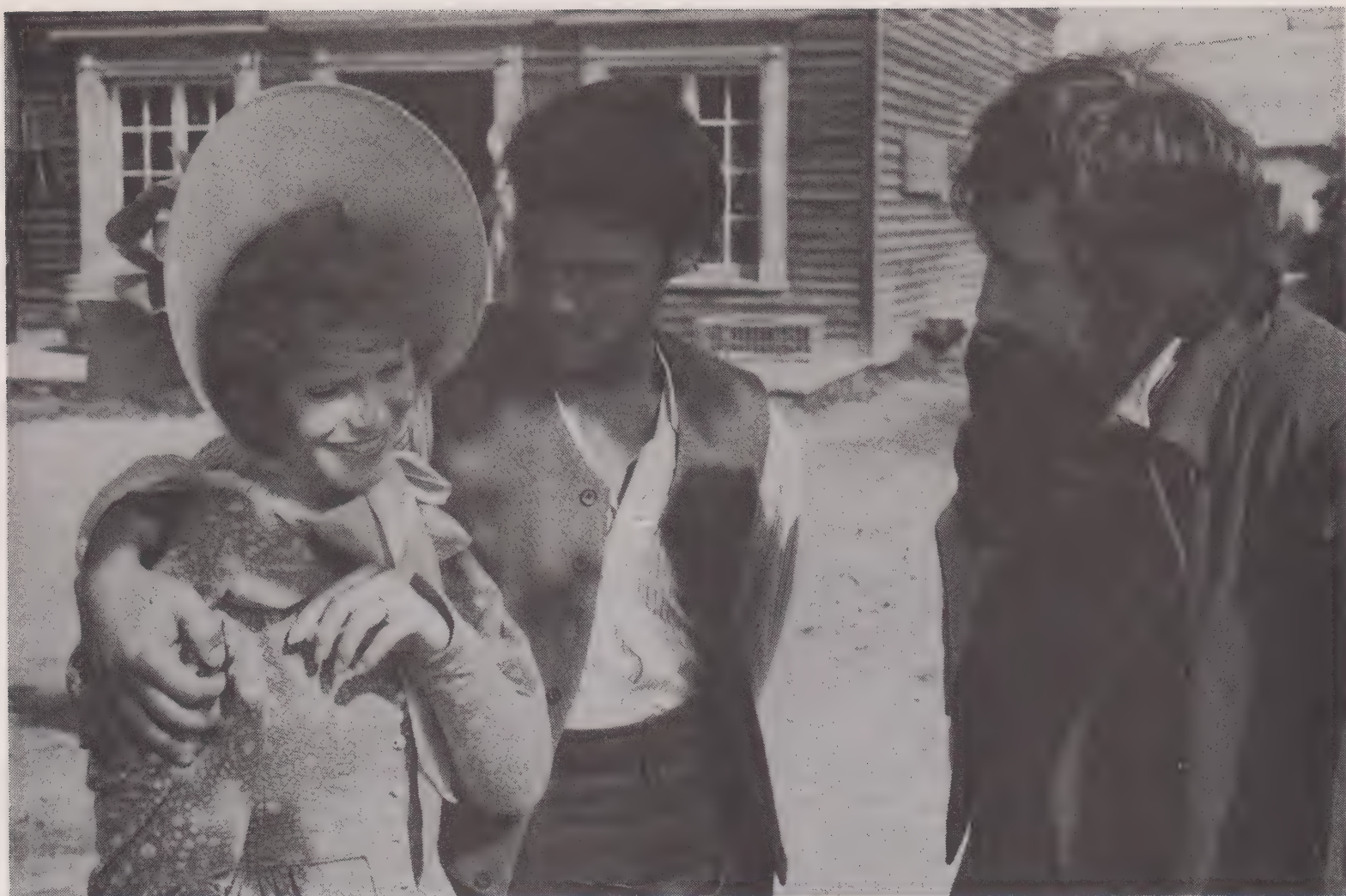
The Newcomers/Les Arrivants, is seven one hour films (in French and English) dramatically tracing the arrival and settlement of the different cultures in Canada through individual families, with the first episode as prologue dealing with the Indian. Commissioned by Imperial Oil Ltd. to mark their 100th anniversary, it cost three million dollars and was filmed on location throughout Canada.

From this experience Ferns speaks highly of Canadian talent "I think if you look at the episode 1847, directed by Eric Till, out of a performance cast of ninety, only a couple gave really weak performances and they were in minor roles. I think the standards of performance were exceptionally high. We have got no qualms about casting things with Canadians."

"My personal view of the acting community here is that it is getting better and better. I think there has been a lot of interesting theatre happening here in Canada and it is giving more work opportunity to the Canadian performer. Frankly, the standards can only rise as more people work."

Though there is a rising optimism in the growth of the Canadian film and television industry, it is obvious that as a whole our industry has not matched the standards of other countries. There is not sufficient work available for producers, writers, directors and performers. The reasons for this according to both men, rests squarely on the shoulders of the Canadian government and its agencies, the CBC, NFB and the grant giving bodies. These are not recent views but have been developed independently throughout each man's career.

Ferns inherited his initial distrust of the Canadian government from his father who worked in the office of Mackenzie King during the war and found himself in exile from Canada in the early McCarthy days because of his suspected activities which included an address to the Anglo-Soviet Friendship Society. "Subsequently," reveals Ferns, "he published the first critical biography of King and that mysteriously disappeared from the bookshelves in Ottawa just after it was published. Which indicates the long arm of the Liberal establishment in this country." Ferns, a top first in Economics at Cambridge was also influenced by the thriving satirical movement at the university which included the people who went on to create Monty Python, the Beyond the Fringe group, and notables David Frost and Germaine Greer. Says Ferns, "My own politics have probably shifted from a fairly left to a much more free enterprise position. I have very lit-



Early settlers in an episode from *The Newcomers*

the confidence in government actually doing business, though it can create an environment in which business can be done."

His masters thesis was an analysis of the film industry in England and his views compared favorably with Nielsen's experience in the Canadian industry.

Nielsen's roots were in Labour as an organizer and in 1961 he joined the CBC. "Politically, I had the humbling experience of being a socialist and working for a government institution... I'm in a position now where I don't regret anything I've done. I'm critical of the establishment, that hasn't changed, but, I don't see public institutions as the solvent remedy I did twenty-five years ago."

According to Nielsen and Ferns the solution to growth in the industry lies in the independent sector. Unlike the American networks who got out of production towards the end of the fifties, the CBC farms out less than five percent of production to the independent.

Says Nielsen, "The only successful network who has done that (produce its own programs) is the BBC because they sit on the doorstep of the greatest theatre in the world and a fifty year old film industry."

Ferns furthers the argument, "Clearly, the CBC is the major cultural institution in this country. Therefore, we do vest in it some very particular responsibility... It buys American programming in order to achieve audience but its being clobbered in the ratings. Where it is a three market situation, it's number three, if it's a four market, it's number four. I think the CBC is clearly failing but it is the organization with the potential to assist the independent."



The Newcomers: Chester McLean as the chief's nephew who will become chief after proving to his tribal elders that he is responsible and mature



Kenneth Welsh in the 1828 episode from *The Newcomers*

Nielsen's basic criticism is that, "The CBC was licensed by the Canadian public to provide broadcasting services," but "it was never given a mandate to produce all the programs it does", and, "the CBC thinks it needs to supply its own facilities, it has no mandate for that either"! He cites the astounding figure of one hundred and forty producers on staff at CBC Toronto. "What publishing house would put novelists on staff? A shlock house!" He adds, "Such a sinecure is a bad environment for producers and expensive to the taxpayer because of the bureaucracy."

The argument, then, is that the CBC is — to put it bluntly, hogging the production work and because of its mommoth size, it has become too expensive and too slow to be able to supply enough work for a rapidly growing pool of talent that can produce a greater volume, at less expense, with greater efficiency. If the independents were running the show, performers would not have to depend on one source for the bulk of their film experience and income, writers could maintain a continuity in their work, instead of the minimal opportunity of writing every "two years", novelists might even take screenwriting more seriously, and producer/directors wouldn't have to go to Hollywood when they want to do drama. The taxpayer would get a break too, standards would rise and the Canadian industry would have a chance of reaching its international maturity and markets. This is the 'independent's vision.'

Another factor which affects the condition of Canada's artists, Nielsen emphasizes, "is the fact that I don't think there has ever been a non-socialist or communist country where so much of the artist's income comes from the government. That is bad creatively. You have to question that sort of system, the same system that deals with the Indians."

Malcolm Muggeridge echoed a similar sentiment when he made note of Dostoevsky's incarceration, "Prisons... have fostered more supreme art and mystical insight than any Arts

Council, Ministry of Culture or other such efforts by way of government encouragement."

The point being that the extent of government subsidy discourages popular art form. Says Nielsen, "Everyone is comfortable in ballet... Classical art can't fail unless the ballerina falls down... but popular art can fail and therefore the politician has to admit the public's money was mispent." As a result, "We are inventing the kind of programing which while it may not be good, is undeniably Canadian." And he adds, "It is painful for me. I go down to Los Angeles and people kid me about it." He admits, "Americans have produced worse than *The King of Kensington* (CBC)," but, "There's more good writing in one episode of *Mary Tyler Moore* than the whole Broadway season."

The system of financing the industry then, is intrinsic to the artistic standards achieved. Nielsen laments, "Since 1950 the Canadian taxpayer has spent five billion dollars for the CBC and the NFB and have not produced a single program that the world wants to see. We are dealing in universals. It is incredible to have spent that amount of money and not have anything that the world recognizes as fine." He concludes, "If the CBC or the government can insist that the independents get fifty to seventy-five percent of what the CBC actually spends, then we can be in business in this country in a major way. We need access to the air-time and the market."

The independents' stand is a strong and critical one and NFI has put their money and talent where their mouths are. They are dedicated to building an independent industry that is "large enough to command the attention and some of the clout of the CBC."

Presently, Pat Ferns is chairman of the television section of the Canadian Film and Television Association (CFTA) which is the major representative of independent producers, the laboratories, optical houses, distributors etc. He revealed that "We, the CFTA, are producing a film directed specifically at the problem that the CBC is not taking enough material from the independent sector. The Secretary of State said that he wants to see more material produced by the independent producers. Al Johnson, the President of the CBC, has assured that this will happen. Unfortunately, we are not per-

suaded that this committment, which I think is honestly made, is actually going to be translated into action on the operational level. Hence, we are producing a film, which, in a sense, is a delegation of some of the leading producers in the country, putting them on film, so we can take that film to the decision-makers in Ottawa... and make our presence felt, because, we are the real alternative to the CBC."

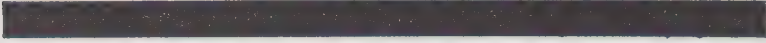
Nor are they stopping there. Ferns adds, "We are going to make an intervention into the CBC's license renewal hearings in October and that film will be part of that presentation."

In *The Newcomers/Les Arrivants* series, one episode dated 1911, is the story of Western-Europeans immigrating into Canada. The story is by Richard Nielsen, and is really the story of Nielsen's own family, in the first year of their arrival. It is a case where the wife did not really want to be here and was always looking back to the mother country; the husband found it a land of opportunity and believed that this is where the chances were.

Sixty-seven years later, Nielsen, still believes this and along with Ferns is energetically building on that opportunity in a major way. This then is the Nielsen-Ferns story... so far.

to market, to market

Short films still provide the economic bread and butter for the vast majority of Canadian filmmakers. Gray Kyles, in the following review of the Distribution and Marketing Seminar for Short Films held last March in Vancouver, tells what one should consider if planning to take a short film to market.



by Gray Kyles

Although the feature film industry in Canada has been growing at an impressive rate in recent years it has perhaps received more attention than it deserves. There have been countless conferences, seminars and position papers about almost every aspect of the production, distribution and marketing of features and most filmmakers in Canada have been told at some time how to make a feature and what to do with it.

Yet the vast majority of Canadian filmmakers still earn their bread and butter in the short film industry and there has been very little said about the economic viability and possibilities of that medium. Countless short films are produced every year which are rarely

seen and fail to return their investment because their makers were poorly equipped to arrange distribution and sales.

In an effort to provide to filmmakers the much needed information about the marketability of short films, the British Columbia Film Industry Association sponsored a Distribution and Marketing Seminar for Short Films last March. The three day seminar was held in the Devonshire Hotel in Vancouver and attracted approximately 150 filmmakers, students, technicians and other interested parties. Prominent short filmmakers, distributors, buyers and government representatives took part as guest speakers and panelists and short films from British Columbia, the rest of Canada and the United States were screened each evening.

If there was any single message of the seminar it was to know what the

market is before you produce a film. Almost every speaker stressed the importance of market research when planning a film. Your twelve minute short on jogging may be great but if there are already four jogging films on the market you're dead. Film buyers don't necessarily look for the best, they often look for the first.

Libraries and school boards are the major film purchasers in Canada. Tes Taconis, the executive director of the Canadian Filmmaker's Distribution Centre, said that most of her sales were to schools and libraries in Ontario. She was also putting together packages of films for sale or rental to art galleries and museums.

Kirk Tougas of the Pacific Cinematheque Pacifique concurred with Taconis that schools were a good market for short films. But he warned that filmmakers were always at the mercy

Gray Kyles is a film student at the University of British Columbia and writes film reviews for the Richmond Review.

of social trends and economic conditions. "At the moment there is a movement to return to the basics in education," he said, "and that means that certain films that were popular a few years ago were out of vogue now." And he added that when budgets are tight, film tends to be a low priority for most school libraries.

Tom Howe, a representative from one of Canada's largest non-theatrical distributors, International Tele-Film Enterprises, stated that the highest a filmmaker can hope for in Canada is about 150 to 200 prints, and that is rare. Although it is possible to recoup a film's cost in Canada alone, Howe suggested that filmmakers try for as wide a market as possible. He estimated that a really good film could sell four or five hundred prints in the U.S. over a period of two or three years and that extra revenue could be picked up through rentals.

Someone who did not agree with Howe was Robert McDonald of Learning Corporation of America. He puts no limit on the number of prints a film can sell but he stressed perhaps more emphatically than anyone else that market research was the most important element in a film's distribution. His company deals almost exclusively with schools in the United States and Canada, and he looks for films that will fill certain specific needs for school curriculums.

"Good, entertaining children's movies with a light moral are what's selling," he said during a panel discussion on the final day of the seminar. "If a film has a good story, is new and original and incorporates good production values, I'll look at it. Otherwise forget it." McDonald stated that he won't touch a film that he thinks can't sell at least 175 prints a year. He also advised filmmakers to budget no higher than two thousand dollars a minute if they ever want to see a return on their investment.

Leo Dratfield of Films Inc. told the seminar participants that they should try to shoot at a ratio of five hundred to one thousand dollars a minute. He agreed that good children's films are what is needed right now but he warned against repetition. "The first always attracts the most attention," he said.

One of the most interesting aspects of the seminar was comparing the va-

rious techniques used by the different distributors. McDonald stunned the crowd when he mentioned that he usually distributes over 100 preview prints for each film he handles. It soon became apparent why he only handles films that will sell extremely well; he has to return the incredible costs he mounts up when marketing his product.

Dratfield and Films Inc. don't go to such extremes but the still put out a number of preview prints and prepare learning guides, flyers and the like. International Tele-Film distributes only in Canada but it will help filmmakers get American distribution. According to Tom Howe the company regularly gives its newer and more promising acquisitions a strong sales push and usually sees impressive results.

One of the most attractive elements of the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre is that it is a non-exclusive distributor. This means that a filmmaker can place his or her film with the Distribution Centre but can also distribute through other channels. And the Centre offers a 70-30 percentage deal in the filmmakers favor which was the best of any of the major distributors represented at the seminar. Learning Corporation only offered filmmakers 10-17 percent of any revenues but McDonald cautioned producers to look at results more than at percentages. Seventeen per cent of 500 prints sold is a lot more than 70 percent of 50 sales.

But distributors weren't the only speakers at the seminar, although they were probably the most interesting to the majority of filmmakers in attendance. Representatives from the CBC, CFDC, the Metropolitan Library of Toronto, the NFB, the Provincial Film Office and the American Public Broadcasting Service also took part in the program. Lyell Shields explained the various ways in which the CFDC may become involved in television production and Bill Sheehan of the regional CBC and Merv Stone the manager of program purchasing for the network, took the usual and rather tiresome heat that network representatives usually face at these affairs.

Sheehan told filmmakers that they should come to see him before they shoot any films that they hope to sell to T.V. rather than after they have

shot them. That way he can give them an indication of whether or not their ideas are things that the CBC is looking for before they spend the time and money on the film.

Toronto lawyer W.E. Hinkson opened the seminar with some pointers on what legal principles to be aware of when preparing a project and Raj Cheganti of the University of Alberta gave a presentation on the necessity of carrying out scientific market research before embarking on a major production. Pen Densham and Phil Borsos spoke on the Filmmakers Perspective and Densham especially provided the participants with some good advice for how to get a film project off the ground. Ron Keeler, the west coast booker for Odeon gave an entertaining talk on theatrical exhibition and basically told filmmakers that for short films theatrical distribution was really only the icing on the cake, few shorts ever make a profit by going the theatrical route.

By the third day of the seminar most of the participants were a lot wiser than they had been. Everyone was talking about their next project, a children's film no doubt, and most were planning their market surveys to see just what was needed in the way of short films. Most of the filmmakers appreciated the information that was made available during the three days and many remarked that they were now more aware of the difficulties and realities of marketing short films. And most people appreciated the opportunity to meet with others in the industry and with major distributors, television buyers etc.

The seminar was well organised and ran smoothly thanks to the work of co-ordinator Peter Bryant, production secretary Deborah McLachlin and moderators Keith Cutler and Pattie Robertson. Each evenings screenings were arranged by Claudette Laurencelle to give the seminar participants an opportunity to see recent works produced locally, nationally and in the United States. The success of the seminar should encourage British Columbia Film Industry Association to produce others on different topics and should encourage other organisations across Canada to do the same.

And oh yes, watch for all of those kids' films coming from B.C. next year!

street people

Daring to document the seamier side of things, Holly Dale and Janis Cole, two street kids, have grown up to confront and film the human side of social deviance. Their documentaries explore the faces and facets of queens, dykes, hookers, transvestites, murderers, rapists and psychopaths with an astonishing and empathic honesty.

by George Csaba Koller



photo: Ellen Tolmie

Holly Dale (left) and Janis Cole take a pause from production

"They're selling postcards of the hanging, they are painting the passports brown, the beauty parlor is filled with sailors, the circus is in town..."

Our fascination with Desolation Row does not stop with Bob Dylan's work. Aside from Ginsberg, Kerouac, Burroughs, there's always Patti Smith and Rimbaud. Norman Mailer wrote an entire book about the psychopath being the (anti) hero of the new culture, the deviant as a trend setter in our collective path of consciousness. Punk rock as a social phenomenon underscores this fascination.

The films of Holly Dale and Janis Cole so far all deal with some form of social deviance, with every queen, dyke and

hooker on the corner, and some psychopathic killers thrown in as icing on the cinematic cake. Sensationalist, you say? Yes, but raised to the level of art by the keen eyes and sympathetic hearts of these two young documentarians.

Their first two films deal with the seedy characters that inhabit Toronto's Yonge Street strip, more specifically its body rub parlors and its transvestite bars. Originally planned as a film on one particular transexual, **Minimum Charge No Cover** begins with her/him sitting in the bathtub, exhibiting some very lovely and feminine breasts and a beautifully made up face. The soft voice almost purrs: "I think of myself as not being different than anybody else, except that I had to alter my body, a simple operation to reject something that wasn't right." What did she want to grow up to be when she was a little boy? A nurse...

If your game is an adult version of doctor and nurse and you're a middle aged businessman, you might go to any one

George Csaba Koller, former editor/publisher of Cinema Canada, is presently at work on a research project on Canadian experimental films. He hopes to write a book on the subject next year.

of a number of body rub parlors along Yonge Street. That's where **Cream Soda** was filmed, a very rough but sensitive documentary on the ladies you might pay to fulfill your fantasies. Holly and Janis did it while they were attending Sheridan College, so technically it is a student film, but its candor and explosive subject matter raise it far above most scholastic fare.

Their latest film, **Thin Line**, proves that they have graduated with honors. It is one of the most powerful documentaries I have ever seen, dealing with the inmates or patients of the maximum security mental hospital at Penetanguishene, Ontario. It took them six months to get the administrators to allow them to film, but during that time they managed to break the ice and approach these criminally insane men on a very human level. Since the basis of therapy at Penetang is exactly this kind of opening up, **Thin Line** exposes us to a confrontation with the human side of murderers, rapists, schizophrenics and psychopaths. An often frightening, enlightening, and deeply moving experience, definitely not for the faint of heart.

Who are these two young women, who are not afraid to be left alone with convicted killers and who can record their encounters with society's deviants with such skill and honesty? Barely in their mid-twenties, they both come from rough street backgrounds; Holly from Toronto's Parkdale district, while Janis' father ran a skid row hotel in Vancouver. "We grew up in environments that were full of unusual characters that you don't meet in a nice middle class, suburban type of living situation. We understood criminals, hoods, people who had sex hangups, street people." These similar formative experiences caused the creative chemistry which has bonded them together since school under the guidance of their mentor, personal filmmaker Rick Hancox.

Presently working on their fourth documentary, an Ontario Arts Council funded exploration of the problems of adolescence, Ms. Dale and Ms. Cole represent the best of the feminist movement's determination: to equal men in any chosen field. Their close collaboration is exhibited during the interview: their energies constantly criss-cross, they complete each other's thoughts and sentences. Holly's exuberance and brashness are offset by Janis' slightly reserved attitude: "After the first two films, we were going to break up. We were constantly getting into arguments. But since **Thin Line**, communication has been much better." Holly agrees: "We're growing with our films. We didn't start out wanting to make films together. It just happened.

"Most people make films to make a statement. We make films to discover a statement." They are conscious of the roots of the documentary as a genre, of the work of Grierson, Pennebaker, Leacock, and the other pioneers. They admire *cinéma vérité* but are closer in approach to direct cinema, which might have something to do with budgetary considerations. They received \$10,000 from the Canada Council to make **Thin Line**, ended up spending two more thousand of their own money. Hardly a budget to cover the expense of the immense amount of footage necessary for *cinéma vérité*. But very impressive, when you consider the technical excellence of the film, on par with NFB fare costing six to ten times as much.

Holly: "We had a very different idea of Penetang before we went there. Then we met the guys..." Janis: "That comes across." Holly: "...and we went through all kinds of emotional things. We didn't know how the public would react to it. **Thin Line** is so positive, that we're leaving ourselves open for criticism." So far it's been favorable. Robert Fulford called the Penetang film "astonishing," and went on to say that "their films are gripping because Holly and Janis are committed not only to their remarkable young careers but to the lives of their subjects."

These include a naked "masseuse" tying her G string while she explains how she performs "extras" for customers willing to pay the price, a trio of black female impersonators giving a rendition of a disco song, complete with garish make up and falsetto voices, and a long haired Penetang patient explaining his crime: "I stabbed the guy 42 times — in a way I was trying to kill myself. He was telling me all his problems, and they were all my problems." The language in all the films is brutally frank, which might bar their being shown on television. But it is the real language of the streets, and as Holly points out: "Reality is a lot more interesting than trying to write dramas about life."

Thin Line is brimming with cathartic moments. It's depiction of the drug therapies used at Penetang calls in to question more traditional methods of dealing with insanity. Instead of tranquillizing the patients, as most other mental hospitals do, Penetang gives them speed and alcohol to work through their problems. One technique is the isolation room, called The Capsule, where two inmates are locked up for two weeks at a time in an 8x10 foot space. Naked from the waist up they lie on mats and have one long continuous rap session. There's an open toilet and they sip their food through straws. They are observed and videotaped 24 hours a day. Some of the opening up under these conditions certainly is astonishing. Oh yes, they are also shot full of speed before they go in.

Those interested in the debate on the pros and cons of capital punishment should certainly see this film. It enables you to overcome your initial revulsion and begin to see these criminals as human beings — fucked up human beings, to be sure, but nevertheless members of our own species, parts of our collective consciousness. Most trace the origins of their criminality back to childhood, cruel, unloving parents, bad circumstances. The way they matter-of-factly relate committing murder, rape, beatings and knifings is horrifying, but at least there is an attempt to cure or rehabilitate them at Penetang, whereas in prisons their criminality is often reinforced. Do we have the right to put them to death for their sins? See **Thin Line** and decide for yourself.

In any case, we should be very grateful to Holly Dale and Janis Cole for taking the trouble to hold up these mirrors reflecting the often not very pretty but certainly very real facets of our human journey in the nineteen seventies. They are very committed to the art and craft of cinema, focusing on subjects with which they're intimately acquainted and having a very definite philosophy to get personally involved with the lifestyles depicted in their documentaries. They make films to fill the needs of their own search for truth. They're a truly dynamic duo with a good sense of humor about themselves and the predicament the world finds itself in six years before 1984.

ready to go professional

It is at the student festivals that we see the filmmakers of tomorrow. Thus we have given considerable space to this year's Tenth Annual Canadian Student Film Festival; the competence of its contenders and the professional quality of competing films shed bright promise on the Canadian film scene.

by Paul Vitols



Dory Dainton, the leading actress in Scott Barrie's sensitive portrait *Gracie* that won both the Best Director Award and the Norman McLaren Award for Best Film

This year's Canadian Student Film Festival, was held at the Banff School of Fine Arts. Its director, Serge Losique, was busy at the World Festival in Montreal and unable to attend. Festival coordinator Lyse Beaulieu organized and operated the student event in his stead, and, despite a number of misfortunes precipitated mainly by the Air Canada strike, produced a high-quality festival that was enjoyed by all those who attended.

Eighty-six films were submitted to Montreal's Conservatory of Cinematographic Art from across Canada this year, of which 40 were selected for competition in Banff, compared to 76 submitted and 24 selected last year. This year's films, besides being greater in number, were of a generally higher quality than last year's, both technically and creatively. The three nights of festival screenings, averaging three to three and a half hours each, were consistently provocative and entertaining. It is ironic that in this year of substantial improvement and advancement of student effort the festival itself was smaller, in turnout and in prizes; for of the 36 students competing only six arrived, and those who won prizes received smaller cash awards than those who won last year.

The general excellence of the films no doubt posed problems for the jury, this year comprising Fil Fraser, film producer at Alberta's Motion Picture Corporation; Louis Hobson, freelance film critic for the *Albertan*; Peter Jones, filmmaker at the NFB, Vancouver; and Don Campbell, film instructor at the South Alberta Institute of Technology. Jury president James Card, and jurors Jean-Claude Lord and Marcel Martin were absent due to the air strike. The jurors attended the festival screenings, made the presentations on awards night, and were available for comment at the party held after the award presentations. In this way the filmmakers were able to obtain criticism and advice from its members, which has not happened in the past.

Part of the reason for the jury's greater accessibility was the fact that there were so few filmmakers present. The air strike evidently made transportation to the festival too difficult for the majority of competitors. The resulting group was therefore small (small enough to fit into Ms. Beaulieu's room for intimate parties on three of the festival's four nights), and very friendly.

The awards were presented in the usual manner: a category would be announced, the winning film would be projected, and the winner would go to the stage to accept his prize. However, since many of the winning filmmakers were absent, representative students from the winners' schools had to accept the prizes in their place. Charles Zamaria of York University went to the stage four times, all for films other than his own.

Prize night started with seven craft awards of \$100. Four were originally intended, but the films were of sufficient caliber to warrant more. Best Sound no doubt would have been awarded, but the jury felt that the quality of projected sound was not good enough to make a judgement. All films suffered some high-frequency distortion, and, some films, from occasional out-of-focus projection.

Best Editing was given to Forrest Taylor of the University of B.C. for his 2-minute fiction film *The Return*. This, I feel, was a mistake on the jury's part. They were somehow

Paul Vitols had a film entered in last year's Student Festival, and was able to attend this year's fest as the first stop on a trip around the world.

infatuated with the film's adequate, but simple and unspectacular, cross-cutting of two lines of action, and an only slightly convincing car crash sequence. Many other films were more deserving of this award, particularly the films *Le Percepteur*, a 14-minute drama by Jean Fontaine which featured a thoughtfully cross-cut story intertwining three separate narrative lines, *Entymology*, a 5-minute experimental story by Roger LeMoyne, in which cutting was used for particularly eerie and startling effects, and Zamaria's 17-minute film *Islanders*, a highly polished documentary in which sometimes-synchronous, sometimes-divergent picture and sound tracks were effectively juxtaposed.

Islanders is worthy of further mention because it was in strong contention for Best Documentary. It dealt with a small island community in Toronto and its struggle against the city to prevent its eradication and replacement by parkland. Often beautifully shot and cut, the film's theme transcended its subject and made a strong point about personal and communal rights, and integrity in the face of bureaucratic indifference. The film deserved more attention than it received from the jury.

Best Score was awarded to Jean Fontaine for Nicole Fortin's flute and piano music in *Le Percepteur*. The award was deserved; the film's sparing use of music was accurate and evocative.

Best Screenplay went to Maxwell Berdowski of Concordia for his 5-minute light comedy *Conversation*. Again I was disappointed in the jury's choice, for a screenplay is certainly a film's fundamental creative step, defining its scope and all-important thematic content. Indeed, the jury's primary admonition to the filmmakers after the festival was that much more labor ought to be devoted to scripts. No doubt their choice reflected their emphasis on concise, streamlined scripting, but theme, originality, and naturalness are surely important, and *Conversation* was clever rather than profound. The meeting of an English businessman and a French ballerina in a disco was handled mechanically and their conversation, and the film, progressed at rapid-transit pace to a forgettable conclusion. The actors spouted lines which were terse and occasionally funny; the film was a piece of clockwork. Two other films with superior screenplays were *Gracie*, written by Scott Barrie and David Rain, which was similarly tightly scripted but packed a much more substantial payload of meaning, and *Not Another Love Story*, written by John Bradshaw, which combined compelling conflicts with humorous and sensitive characterization.

Best Cinematography went to Louis Arthur of Algonquin College for Denis Vachon's 23-minute fiction *Préméditation*. *Préméditation* was the only film at the festival which could truly be called overtly intellectual. If anyone has the right to experiment with film and analyze unusual or intellectual topics, students do, and I was surprised that there weren't more films directed specifically at the audience's higher faculties. In *Préméditation* the protagonist received instructions to assassinate a man, whom the protagonist then followed and, at the end, killed. There was little synchronous sound in the film, except the shooting, which was rendered in sync. The soundtrack was occupied with two separate levels of narration: the protagonist's narration of his actions, and an unknown narrator's questions posed to the audience regarding what it saw on the screen. When Vachon was asked later who had ordered the killing and why, he replied that he

didn't know and didn't care; he was concerned with the audience's attitude toward the events in the film. And, in accordance with the film's abstract nature, Arthur's black-and-white cinematography was objective and austere. The film, although it had technical faults (some scenes lacked contrast and the print was unclean), it was competently shot, and quite striking in parts. The killing was particularly memorable; the assassin shot his victim in an empty warehouse-like building, which was rendered as two plain, contrasting rectangles — the interior, and its large, bright doorway — a bleak, angular, climactic location for this noetic film. Honorable mention for cinematography went to Roman Podzyhun for Anthony D'Andrea's drama **Nomads**. Podzyhun was in demand as a cinematographer at York, and worked on a number of films. His black-and-white work in **Nomads** demonstrated expertise in difficult situations, such as night shooting, and lighting deep, complicated sets with numerous sources.

Once again, I feel **Not Another Love Story** was overlooked. Michael Kennedy's cinematography of this black-and-white film was virtually flawless, all the more impressive a feat considering its 56-minute length — the longest in the festival. The shots were always sharp, steady, well-lit, well-composed, and appropriately contrasty. As for color cinematography, nothing was shot better than **Islanders**, with its many technically clean and evocative images, which are especially difficult to achieve in a documentary.

Patricia Nember of York won Best Actress for her performance in Oscar Zambrano's 30-minute drama **Back From Paradise**. She had the most dynamic female role of the festival, and played it well, weathering the cliché and banal portions of the script with skill. For although the dialogue was occasionally witty and the characters had charm, Zambrano could not overcome the intrinsic triteness of his boy-meets-girl, boy-lives-with-girl, boy-loses-girl story. Still, Nember's

prize was earned, and was particularly remarkable because she had had no previous acting experience in either theater or film.

Paul Fitzgerald took Best Actor for his fine portrayal of a slightly confused young TV-news interviewer in **Not Another Love Story**. Fitzgerald was funny, sensitive, and irresistibly human in his performance. His nuances of voice, gesture, and expression were subtle, and revealed great talent. He was a pleasure to watch; the jury and audience were unanimous in their approval.

Four prizes of \$250 were allotted to the best films of the four competing categories: animation, experimental, documentary, and fiction.

Best Animation was awarded to **Madhouse Rag**, a 3-minute rendition of the **Sorcerer's Apprentice** idea by Dev Ramsaran of Sheridan College. The film featured celluloid animation of great technical and artistic sophistication: an entire living-room sprang to life after its occupants left. Characters and backgrounds were well-drawn; action was depicted in several planes simultaneously; character distortion in movement was of professional quality. Ramsaran is obviously a highly competent animator. However, Horace Lapp's piano score seemed weak at points, and the idea is an old one. Honorable mention was given to Carole Trépanier's 1-1/2-minute film **Child's Play**, a brief piece of what appeared to be rotoscoping composed of pastel colors and nursery music.

Ignored (or possibly disqualified) by the jury was **Heads & Tails**, a fully professional-looking 3-minute animation by Ida Eva Zielinska of Concordia. Some of the film's polish was due to the fact it was shot professionally with 35mm equipment. The writing was crisp: a facetious analysis of society's "heads" (thinkers) and "tails" (doers), and the narration was clean and perfectly timed. The film was marred only by its credits, which were rather pretentiously super-



John Hillcoat's **The Finger**, the story of a free-living, disembodied finger

posed on an image of Zielinska's face.

Also worthy of mention is John Hillcoat's **The Finger**. It was the only entry from a secondary school (and about the best entry from the west coast), and, although it exhibited elements of high-school humor and borrowings from Monty Python, it achieved a comparatively high degree of success. The story of a free-living, disembodied finger became a rough account of a creation myth and theogony, with crazy, nutshell encapsulation of many world problems thrown in. The film appeared to have originated from a comic strip, and in its coarse way was funner than many of the other comedies at the festival.

There were several good experimental films at this year's festival, which is a substantial improvement over last year's. The category winner was **L'Instant**, a 5-minute black-and-white film by Andjela Milosavljevic of Concordia. The film was beautiful in intent and execution — filmed poetry. Milosavljevic depicted a girl in the time it took for a struck match to burn down. The girl forlornly watched the delicate flame in front of her mirror, her emotion revealed by a series of silent, musically-accompanied scenes of her experiencing solitary anguish. In the intercut scenes she paced, wept, stared out through her curtain at the moving street. The indefinable wave of feeling that moved the girl was communicated; the flame died; the instant passed. Film is a difficult medium in which to represent emotion, as opposed to plot, and Milosavljevic's unusual film succeeded.

An honorable mention was given to Suzanne Naughton's 6-minute montage **Mondo Punk**. Punk costume and behavior were cut to music by the Ramones and the Sex Pistols, and the film did not flinch from showing self-mutilation. The film was generally well-cut but suffered from weak transitions between songs.

Entymology was a strong contender. LeMoyné told a brief, bizarre tale of an insignificant man who wrote an autobiographical tome, mailed it to a publisher, and shot himself. The manuscript was lost and the lady upstairs accidentally cut herself when she heard the gunshot. The story was narrated with disquieting casualness, and the film was faintly sinister. The man was played well by Michael Riggio, who had two very experimental films of his own in the festival.

Best Documentary was shared by Michael Kennedy of Ryerson for **Jim & Muggins Tour Toronto** and Robert Boyd of Simon Fraser University for **Labyrinth**. **Jim & Muggins** was something of a novelty; in a typically relaxed, informal style, Kennedy showed a series of scenes of his ex-roommate Jim, with his bull terrier Muggins, describing various Toronto landmarks. Jim discussed the sites and his personal history with unassuming, ad-libbed humor, adding irrelevant and funny facts about his dog. Shot by John Bradshaw, the film demonstrated the technical facility of this Ryerson team. Whether the film ought to have been awarded Best Documentary is another matter.

Labyrinth was entered as a fiction film. The jury changed its category and awarded it. The film was actually a 23-minute promotional film for Alpha Cine lab of Vancouver. Stephen Miller effectively played a brash, know-nothing young film director who insisted on escorting his film through all its laboratory work. I learned a considerable amount about the machinations of a film lab, but it wasn't worth the crass suggestions about Alpha's courteous, responsible service.

A superior alternative would have been **Islanders**, or Cathy Barbalinardo's 13-minute documentary **The Mud Dabbler**. Some people at the festival criticized the film for being too cute, too commercial, but it was effective in that the winsomeness of its sculptress subject and her creations showed through strongly, and the film was technically clean and very well organized. I became absorbed in the formation of clay figures before my eyes, and could not help liking the film.

A worthy, if flawed, effort was made by Christopher Why-not of Queens College with **Sheila**, a 15-minute film about a mentally retarded woman. It was a touching film; Sheila's personality was developed well, and one could not help feeling admiration for the woman with whom Sheila was staying at the time of shooting. Unfortunately, technical problems got in the way: focus and color balance, and a shooting ratio of 2.5 to 1. Why-not did a good job with the material.

Best Fiction was won by Anthony D'Andrea for **Nomads**. The story of a young trucker haunted by the image of a girl, whom he later meets at a truck stop and pursues, ran into

The Winners

BEST EDITING

The Return, Forrest Taylor (director), University of B.C.

BEST SCORE

Le percepteur, Jean Fontaine (director), Cegep de Matane

BEST ACTOR

Not Another Love Story, Paul Fitzgerald (actor),
Ryerson Polyt. Institute

BEST ACTRESS

Back from Paradise, Patricia Nember (actress),
York University

BEST SCREENPLAY

Conversation, Maxwell Berdowski (director),
Concordia University

BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY

Premeditation, Louis Arthur (cameraman),
Algonquin College

honorary mention

Nomads, York University

BEST DIRECTOR

Gracie Scott Barrie, Conestoga College

BEST EXPERIMENTAL

L'Instant, Andjela Milosavljevic, Concordia University
honorary mention — not unanimous

Mondo Punk, Suzanne Naughton, Ryerson Polyt. Institute

BEST ANIMATION

Madhouse Rag, Dev Ramsaran, Sheridan College
honorary mention

Child's Play, Carole Trepanier, University of B.C.

BEST DOCUMENTARY

Jim & Muggins Tour Toronto, Michael Kennedy,
Ryerson Polyt. Institute

BEST DOCUMENTARY

Labyrinth, Bob Boyd, Simon Fraser University
BEST FICTION

Nomads, Anthony D'Andrea, York University

NORMAN McLAREN AWARD

FICTION Gracie, Scott Barrie, Conestoga College



Fred Frame's *It Beats Selling Pencils*, a contestant at Banff

some terribly corny moments, but also showed a certain sensitivity of theme and some genuinely good drama. D'Andrea went the way of most student filmmakers and bit off more than he could convincingly chew, but William Finley made an admirable hero, and the subtle equation of the trans-Canada highway with the road of life was well-presented. However, several other films were at least as eligible.

A film which was generally either disliked or ignored was G. Scott LaBarge's *The Hungry and the Hunted*, a 40-minute journey into squalor and utter moral corruption. Its protagonist, played believably by Tom Joekin, was a gun-runner and small-time hitman who was duped into doing an important execution for a pittance. In the interim there were long scenes of his seamy apartment life, and preparations for the big job, strongly reminiscent of Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*. There was also an excellent scene with a girl addict whom the protagonist fumblingly, hopelessly, reached out for, but who was in too much of a stupor to pay attention. In bitter, futile anger the protagonist raped the girl, who retaliated by spitting into his sleeping face and vandalizing his bathroom. The film exuded hopelessness, its protagonist a lonely coward destined for oblivion. With slightly more originality and considerable tightening, the film could have been excellent.

Other films worth consideration were Milosavljevic's *Avoir chaud aux pieds....*, a 10-minute encounter between a girl and her ex-boyfriend's friend, who tries to cheer her up and goes so far as to do a strip-tease, and *La vie heureuse des poissons rouges* by Nikola Curcin, a colorful 7-minute story of a writer who submits to sexual blackmail, waiting for his woman to give him some "inspiration."

Best Director and the \$1000 Norman McLaren Award for best film were given to Scott Barrie for his sensitive 14-minute drama *Gracie*. An elderly woman, played skilfully by Dory Dainton, watched fearfully from her window each time the local grocer delivered food and knocked persistently (hopefully?) at her door. He would set the groceries down and

slowly walk away. Diligently, Gracie made herself a dress, in preparation for the occasion when she would finally open her door to the grocer. One night the man knocked, and we saw Gracie standing, ready, in her dress. She opened the door and allowed the man in; their conversation was warm and relaxed; her fears were unfounded. The man stayed to tea, and even listened to some music and suggested they dance. However, with a well-timed, painful cut, Barrie brings us back to reality: Gracie sits alone, frightened and ashamed in her new dress, and the knocking goes on. Slowly, the man once again sets down his groceries and walks into the night. Barrie, in association with his cinematographer Raymond Lam, showed a clean style with excellent attention to detail. Gracie's caged bird was used tastefully, as were the various artifacts in her house which were occasionally cut to. The film was succinct and poignant. Barrie, a third year student at Conestoga College, obviously has a good command of the medium.

Best Director could also have gone to Graeme Campbell of Concordia for his 16-minute film *Bye Now*. The film was unique; an incredibly brash Montrealer bulled and cheated his way through a chaotic night, disrupting every other character's life in passing. Campbell stated that he wanted to create a character who was even more unlikeable at the end than he was at the beginning, and he succeeded. Campbell's style is faintly Altmanesque: he excels at scenes of confusion — everyone talking at once, several actions occurring simultaneously — which is difficult to do well, and rare in a student festival, where depicted events tend to be single and linear. Hence, although aspects of the film itself could be questioned, its directorial style is worthy.

My greatest disappointment at the festival was the comparative failure of *Not Another Love Story*. This excellent film was absorbing and amusing to watch. Some people complained that the film used too many long shots, but both the content and the structure of the film warranted them. The hero's life evolved from entrapment with a nagging girlfriend at the outset, to his freedom and good fortune with a far more interesting companion at the end, and the visual style of the film exemplified this process: long, static shots at the beginning, changing to more free, dynamic camerawork by the end. Also, Paul Fitzgerald allowed Bradshaw to do whatever he thought necessary, because his actor was competent. Indeed, Bradshaw himself was deficient in no aspect of his work. The script was witty, yet plausible, and the directing was outstanding. It is difficult to say how much of the actors' business originated in improvisation, but Fitzgerald in particular was very realistic in his stuttering pursuit of numerous conversational cul-de-sacs, and in his other flawed, true-to-life business. This was a bold step when compared to the cut-and-dried, straight-line dialogue of most films. Bradshaw made a fine film, and it is unfortunate that the festival jury did not acknowledge someone who is so close to mastery of his craft.

I have devoted considerable space to this year's student film festival because the films were of a high quality — at least as high as many professional films being made in Canada — and because this decade's students will be next decade's professionals: the potential objects of Canadian public apathy or adulation. Most of this year's contenders are ready for the market; it is too bad that, by and large, the market is not ready for them.

BOOKS-HELP

by George L. George

Historic Perspectives

Movie historian Arthur Knight has revised and expanded his classical panorama of movie history, **The Live-liest Art**, undoubtedly the best available one-volume chronicle of film's progress. The updating has been done most skillfully, confirming Knight's soundness of judgment and his knowledgeable appreciation of the art's evolution (Macmillan \$15.95).

A well-documented and informative study, **A Critical History of British Cinema** by Roy Armes offers an in-depth appraisal of films and filmmakers that sets in perspective the contribution of several generations of directors. In addition, the book supplies production statistics, a chronology, a bibliography, and a thoughtful forecast of the British film history's future (Oxford U. Press \$17.50).

Cobett Steinberg's **Reel Facts** is a convenient and comprehensive reference work, compiling statistics, figures and data about movies, awards, "ten best" lists, money-making films, major Hollywood studios' history and production records, codes and regulations (Vintage/Random House \$3.95).

The high points in the continuing development of cinema art are aptly surveyed by Stephen C. Early in **An Introduction to American Movies**. The book assesses perceptively the main currents and attitudes of American filmdom in its survey of films, filmmakers and stars (NAL/Mentor \$2.25).

In **Aspects of American Film History Prior to 1920**, Anthony Slide casts a scholarly eye at many areas of period filmmaking in the U.S. Directors, producers, and performers are discussed, books and magazines are compiled as well as an informative bibliography of early film companies (Scarecrow \$7.50).

The development on the U.S. motion picture industry is viewed in extensive detail in Prof. Robert H. Sterling's **The Celluloid Empire**. He analyzes with broad scholarship the corporate structure and management control of the producing companies, whose pictures were most influential in shaping the lifestyle of millions of spectators (Hastings House \$15.75/7.95).

Academy Award winning George L. George is a film director who does film book reviews in Canada, France and the U.S.

Surrealist filmmakers may have contributed to cinema art only a handful of movies, but they have all been significant in terms of the time they appeared on the screen and the impetus they provided for a re-evaluation of the movies' esthetic potential. In **The Real World of the Surrealists**, a superbly illustrated large format volume, Malcolm Haslam skillfully integrates their work within the larger scope of the movement (Rizzoli \$35).

A Treasury of Directors

Two classical studies of directors have been re-issued in expanded and updated editions by the U. of California Press. **John Ford**, a critical study as well as a personal memoir by Peter Bogdanovich, includes a full and detailed filmography. **Luis Bunuel** by Raymond Durnat follows with insight and scholarly objectivity the evolution of Bunuel's career. An excellent filmography (up to but excluding that "Obscure Object of Desire") is appended (\$4.95 ea).

Still considered a top screenwriter 25 years after his death, Herman Mankiewicz's claim to fame is his work on "Citizen Kane", Orson Welles' fulgurant Hollywood debut. In **Mank**, Richard Meryman pens an affectionate biography of the scripter, whose caustic with, outspokenness and dissolute ways of life brought him more admirers than critics (Morrow \$12.95).

Joan Fontaine's autobiography, **No Bed of Roses**, is a candid and touching testimony to the pitfalls of excessive sensitivity. The actress relates the emotional problems that beset her since childhood and that the tense Hollywood milieu only aggravated into utter despair (Morrow \$9.95).

The life of a he-man of the films, **Robert Mitchum On the Screen** is reviewed by Alvin H. Marill in his highly readable record of the actor's 95 movies during a successful 30 years' career (Barnes \$19.95).

In **Actress: Postcards from the Road**, Elizabeth Ashley (and co-author Ross Firestone) depict the dramatic events in her impulsive life, where personal happiness was too often the victim of career-motivated compulsions (Evans \$10).

The original singing cowboy of film, Gene Autry has written (with Mickey Herskowitz) an engaging and unassuming autobiography, **Back In the Saddle Again**. A whole era of movies is evoked in this book where memories are backed by a keen sense of historic determinism (Doubleday \$8.95).

Names in the News

Under the general editorship of Prof. Ronald Gottesman, G.K. Hall & Co. (70 Lincoln St., Boston, MA 02111) has issued 6 volumes in its Reference Publications In Film series. Each of these books, all subtitled "A Guide to References and Resources," deals with a top director and offers an abundant source of facts about his life and work.

Written by different authors, the texts follow a common overall method of dealing with its subject in a manner intended to foster and facilitate study, and provide a valid uniform approach. The scholarship of these books is consistently high, all displaying serious original research, extensive knowledge of film history, and excellent literary style.

Each book, following the author's preface, offers first a biographical background. This is followed by a critical survey of the oeuvre, analyzing the director's particular style, work methods, and cinematic preferences. A film-by-film survey comes next, including a synopsis, credits and relevant notes. Writings about the director are then extensively compiled, listing books and magazine articles. Follows a section of the director's other activities, such as acting, producing, writing, etc. Finally film distributors are listed who handle the director's available movies. Indices of authors and films conclude the volume.

Here are the titles comprising this valuable and scholarly series: **Federico Fellini** by John C. Stubbs with Constance Markey and Marc Lenzi (\$30); **Ken Russell** by Diane Rosenfeldt (\$14); **Ernst Lubitsch** by Robert L. Carringer and Barry Sabath (\$20); **Richard Lester** by Diane Rosenfeldt (\$15); **John Schlesinger** by Nancy J. Brooker (\$14); and **Robert Flaherty** by William T. Murphy (\$18).

DISTORTION IN MOTION PICTURE SOUND TRACKS

Until magnetic recording was introduced after World War II, sound was recorded as a continuous photographic track on the edge of the picture film, in the form of either variable density or variable area. These methods were known at first as optical sound recording, and the term is still widely used. But later on, the term "photographic" was adopted in industry standards and recommended practices.

The first Movietone newsreel was shown to the public in 1927, and the first talking picture made outdoors, **In Old Arizona**, was released in December 1928, nearly 50 years ago. Sound recording for these releases utilized a light source that varied in intensity to expose the film. The development of light-modulating devices, galvanometers and light valves, led very quickly to the adoption of sound on film in motion picture production. But the early recordings suffered from considerable amounts of distortion.

Investigations of variable density recording showed that unwanted signals were being generated in a non-linear transfer characteristic when low level, high frequency components were superimposed on high level, lower frequencies. A method of intermodulation testing was devised consisting of a 1 kHz or 7 kHz signal imposed on a 60 Hz tone at 10dB lower level, recorded on film at various exposure levels, development gammas and printer exposures. Conditions giving the lowest value of 60 Hz output were then selected as most

favorable for production recording. In practice the intermodulation component could be reduced to about 5 percent of the fully recorded signal, corresponding to approximately 1 percent harmonic distortion.

Early variable area tracks suffered from severe sibilance, caused by rectification of the signal by fill-in of the recorded audio waveforms, producing harmonic distortion. A technique known as cross modulation analysis was developed, in which a series of recordings were made of a 9 kHz tone modulated at 400 Hz, and then printed at different exposure levels. A condition of minimum 400 Hz output from the print was considered to be optimum, where the fill-in of the negative waveforms was being cancelled out in the print.

A variable area soundtrack is fundamentally an oscillographic trace of the original sound waves, having all the area on one side of the trace transparent, and all the area on the other side opaque. Various forms of variable area recordings have been developed, such as unilateral, bilateral and push-pull, but all are designed to vary the light intensity that reaches the photocell — or light-sensitive element — in the sound reproducer, in relation to the original sound waves.

Because of the way images are formed in film materials, complete opacity and transparency are impossible, but high density contrast is essential in obtaining an adequate signal-to-noise ratio. In a good quality variable area recording the film image must be exactly the same size and shape as the optical image by which it was produced.

All film materials diffuse light as it passes through the sensitive emulsion. The effect of diffusion is to spread the exposure through the emulsion in surrounding areas. As a result, the boundary of the film image lacks

sharpness, and it may be larger or smaller than the original optical image.

At lower frequencies, where the recorded waveforms are fairly large, image spreading is of little significance. But in the film images corresponding to higher frequencies, the peaks and troughs of the waveforms become distorted. To produce prints with images having the same size and shape as the original optical waveforms, the negative images must be made larger, and the clear portions smaller. Then, in printing, the printer exposure has to be adjusted to cancel out the waveform distortion in the negative. Optimizing negative and print exposure conditions in this way reduces sibilance. The balance density, determined by a cross modulation test procedure, might be expected to give cancellation of as much as 40dB in the 400 Hz output.

Recently there has been greatly increased interest in photographic sound recording. Advances in recording techniques, materials and equipment have made possible high quality stereophonic recording in both 16mm. and 35mm. motion pictures, each channel being recorded in one-half of the normal variable area soundtrack.

With the advent of widescreen pictures, stereophonic sound became very popular. At first the sound was recorded on magnetic tracks, on the edge of the picture film, or a separate synchronously-running magnetic film. The added cost of striping and recording the sound tracks and the multi-channel reproducing equipment gave impetus to the development of improved photographic sound systems.

Distortion Balance Testing Procedures.

A paper in the September 1977 issue of SMPTE Journal, with the title "Distortion Balance Tests for Motion Picture Sound Tracks" by Ralph Wells, formerly of Columbia Pictures Corp. in Hollywood, describes a method

*Long time Supervisor of Technical Film Operations at the programming centre of the CBC, Mr. Ross is the author of two books, **Television Film Engineering and Color Film for Color Television**, has won the Agfa-Gevaert Gold Medal, awarded by the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers, and is presently Chairman of the SMPTE Board of Editors.*

for calculating optimum print density from a measurement of the percentage distortion in the negative. This means that distortion rather than negative density is the determining factor in the exposure of the sound track in the prints. With this method, production operations can be speeded up and improved considerably.

Distortion caused by image spread, recording slit width and printer contact are second harmonic, increasing both with frequency and amplitude. When the negative distortions are the same amplitudes as the print distortions, they will cancel and give high quality prints.

In the conventional cross modulation test method, a 400 Hz sine wave is generated whenever unbalanced distortion is present. The distortion balance generator developed at Columbia Pictures Corp. makes use of a constant-amplitude high-frequency signal of 80 percent amplitude, pulsed at a 400 Hz rate. The test frequencies can be pre-recorded on magnetic tape and spliced or looped to provide a simple test source for making the photographic sound tests.

A distortion balance test can be recorded, printed and measured with a 400 Hz filter in exactly the same way as the conventional cross modulation test, and will give the same results, but a quicker, simpler and more accurate technique, is to make use of percent distortion instead of cancellation. The author describes this method as follows:

"To provide a reference it is assumed that if a high frequency section were to fill-in solid, it would generate a square wave with amplitude equal to one-half the peak-to-peak value of the original sine wave signal. This square wave is our 100 percent distortion reference, and it is easily generated by substituting a 400 Hz square wave having an amplitude which is 50 percent of that of the high frequency sine wave. The square wave is recorded first as a reference, followed by the distortion balance signal. The print is then played back through a 400 Hz filter and the gain adjusted to give a 100 percent output meter reading. Distortion is then read directly as a

percentage of this output voltage instead of decibel cancellation".

Illustrations in the paper show how the distortion balance test produces nearly straight parallel lines on a graph where percent distortions are plotted against negative and print densities, and these lines intersect a "zero" distortion line, where the negative and print distortions are balanced.

Variations of this test procedure are described in the paper also, includ-

ing a coded distortion balance test on the same principle as an aerial navigation system where a pilot can hear a series of Morse code "A's" (dit-dah) when his aircraft is on one side of the radio beam and a series of "N's" (dah-dit) on the other side. On beam, the signal is nulled. This kind of test indicates aurally (without measurement) a density mismatch of about 0.04, corresponding to 1.5 percent distortion.

EMERGENCY FILM STOCK **AVAILABLE FROM** **KODAK CANADA LTD/LTEE**

Cash or Chargex. Telephone your order first.
Please note: Not all Specs Stocked in Branches.

MONTREAL: 2 Place du Commerce,
Ile des Soeurs,
Tel: 671-3481

Monday to Friday 8:30 AM to 4:15 PM
16 mm:

7247, 7240, 7244,
7250, in 100'/400'

35 mm: 5247, in 400'/1000'

TORONTO: Consumer Centre,
3500 Eglinton Ave., W.,
at Weston Road,
Tel: 766-8233

Monday to Friday 8:30 AM to 5 PM

16 mm: 7247, 7240, 7242, 7252,
in 100'/400'

35 mm: 5247, in 400'

VANCOUVER: Processing Laboratory,
1225 East Keith Road,
North Vancouver.
Tel: 987-8191

Monday to Friday 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM

16 mm: 7240, 7242, 7247, 7250,
7252, in 100'/400'

35 mm: 5247, in 400'/1000'

FILM REVIEWS

George Kaczender's IN PRAISE OF OLDER WOMEN

d. George Kaczender, sc. Paul Gottlieb, adapt. Adapted from a Stephen Vizinczey novel, ph. Miklos Lente, l.p. Karen Black, Tom Berenger, Susan Strasberg, Alexandra Stewart, Marilyn Lightstone, Helen Shaver, Louise Marleau, Marianne McIsaac, Monique Lepage, Helen Shaver, Susan Watson, exec. p. Stephen J. Roth, & Harold Greenberg, p. Robert Lantos & Claude Héroux, assoc. p. Howard R. Lipson, p.c. Astral Bellevue Pathé & R.S.L. Productions, 1977 co. 35mm, running time 120 minutes, dist. Astral Films



Tom Berenger as András gets lit by a Hungarian torch singer

Stephen Vizinczey's memoir *In Praise of Older Women* has sold two million copies since its publication in 1965. The *New York Times* hailed it as "refreshing, individual — a post-pornographic book." Canada's leading literary critic, Northrop Frye, described it as being "written with great lucidity and charm." The most commonly recurring word in the book's reviews was "elegant": "Elegantly entertaining," said *The Times* of London. "Elegant, exact and melodious," said *The Sunday Telegraph*. "Elegantly erotic" said *Punch*. What impressed these reviewers was Vizinczey's ability to blend sensuality with wit, carnality with intelligence; in short — lust with taste.

Vizinczey's book is a delightful entertainment in which he describes the erotic adventures of his surrogate-self, András Vajda, from age 10 in Hungary, to age 30, by which time he has immigrated to Canada and accepted a teaching post in Saskatoon. The book is lyrical about Hungary, satirical about Canada; reverent about sex, dilettantish about politics. Its 185 pages can be breezily read in a couple of hours, making it the ideal kind of

light reading for travellers beset with interruptions and distractions or people with more permanently restive attention-spans. It is too slight a work however to be regarded as a minor classic, even as erotica; Vajda-Vizinczey has curiously naive attitudes for a libertine: he describes a lesbian as having "strong male drives;" homosexuals are invariably "unmanly;" he tends to view any sexual act other than intercourse with disdain. *In Praise of Older Women* is not the troubling work of a sexual revolutionary; simply a little night music composed by a middleclass "swinger."

The appeal of the book to producer Robert Lantos, director George Kaczender, scriptwriter Paul Gottlieb, cinematographer Miklos Lente, among others responsible for the film version is understandable: each is an Hungarian emigré, for whom the story clearly strikes a strong emotional chord. Besides, given the popularity of the book and the saleability of the theme (Vajda is an upbeat, "sensitive" Alfie, a Casanova without machismo) a film version looks like a wise commercial investment. On the strength of its cast

(Karen Black, Susan Strasberg, Helen Shaver, Marilyn Lightstone, and Tom Berenger, from *Looking for Mr. Goodbar*, as Vajda), and a slick advertising campaign, *In Praise of Older Women* may be the singular Canadian hit of the fall-winter season — but not, I expect, if word-of-mouth gets around fast.

There were basically two ways to proceed in adapting the novel: the mentally-easy and obvious course would have been to make a glossy, grade A, porno-film, for Vizinczey's memoir is sexually explicit, and its structure is that of most erotica; whenever the author feels that a reader's interest may be lagging, he changes partners and a new round of seductive intrigue begins. The book has nothing on its mind (despite a pretentious epilogue about "the meaning of sex" that would not get more than a C plus in a philosophy course) except orgasms. The problem with following this route is that — being Canadians — even if we did make porno films we probably couldn't muster the élan of the Swedish or the French; the hard-core market is wildly unreliable with most pro-

vinces and states in such a bewildering condition of ambivalence, enforcing laws based on such arbitrary standards, that a direct and honest translation of book-into-film was not considered practical. The problem which Kaczender and Gotlieb faced was one of cultural lag and confusion. In 1978, it is permissible (even in Ontario) to write and publish sexually explicit material; but a photograph of the same acts runs a high risk of prosecution. What in one medium is now considered conventional, is in another (even when restricted to an adult audience) considered outrageous. When a book becomes famous, due in great part to its sexual candor, and filmmakers become tempted to cash in on the success but also feel obliged to delete the sex or reduce it to head-and-shoulder couplings or "artfully" choreographed scenes in which a shadow, a bedpost or strategically-placed vase of roses means the difference between an "R" and an "X," what emerges is a hypocritical hodgepodge — a film that talks out of both sides of its mouth — a sniggering yes, and a cowardly no.

The alternative to that dilemma is to alter the book significantly and deliberately in an altogether different direction. When Stanley Kubrick made *Lolita* he recognized two limitations — one in himself (he has no aptitude for depicting sensuality, beyond his highly-developed sense of visual beauty) and the other in society (erotic interplay between a 12-year-old girl and a middle-aged man would not have been permitted in a film in 1963, or even in 1978 given the legal difficulties of Louis Malle's *Pretty Baby*). Normally those limitations would disqualify anyone from adapting *Lolita*, but Kubrick's gamble was that one could produce an "interpretation" of the book, substituting a new kind of pleasure — brilliantly sly satire — for the one that had made the novel notorious. Whether he succeeded or not is open to debate (he occasionally has expressed the wish to try it again, for the film is clearly compromised by moral attitudes of the time) but it is still an option for filmmakers caught in the crevice between avant-garde literature and rear-guard cinema. Following this method of adapting *In Praise of Older*

Women the director should have regarded as his models such European films as *Loves of a Blonde* or *Closely Watched Trains* — that is, drawing upon his knowledge of Hungary; and the experience of dislocation in being an immigrant, given us a film that concentrates on well-drawn characters, and a sense of time-and-place that one can almost taste and smell in its palpability.

Kaczender's past films (*Don't Let the Angels Fall*, and *U-Turn*) seemed emotionally flat and uninvolved — which I attributed to the slightness of their scenarios. This time, with a better range of material, the effect is roughly the same — one watches with polite, rather than rapt, attention. And this time my conclusion is harsher: I don't think Kaczender knows how to "hook" an audience. His films look good (in a tv-commercial way) but they are unengaging on any other level.

The novel, slight though it is, maintained a keen sense of irony which the film lacks; space permits only one telling example. Vizinczey depicts an encounter between Vajda and a young actress named Mici. She leads him on, and agrees to go back to his room, then has a sudden change-of-mind and begins worrying if she'll get pregnant. Of her own accord she offers to have sex the "safe" way — orally — ("Well, you want me to do it or not?" she asks; "I wouldn't dream of inconveniencing you," András replies) but given András' attitudes to oral sex he doesn't find deliverance. ("We made love in the French way," he says. "We both came but it didn't help me, my headache only grew worse. Mici was completely satisfied. It was the culmination of her chaste dreams, I suppose: the mysterious immaculate conception.") In the film, Gottlieb and Kaczender show András picking up a young cabaret singer (who does a lusty song-and-dance routine that enflames András's imagination) only to have her turn out, somewhat incongruously, to be merely a "cock-teaser." András goes home, without any sex, complaining bitterly about the fickleness and lack of sophistication of young girls. Frequently throughout the film one finds the novel being

cheapened and coarsened, made into stereotypical situations. Other chapters of the novel, such as one showing Vajda's rather heartless affair with an impoverished mother-of-two, are left out altogether. The end result is a fuzzy and trivial film about a man who never grows up, and who is never forced to take anything seriously.

With the exception of Helen Shaver, normally a fine actress, but here confined to an embarrassingly silly caricature of a North American faculty-wife, most of the cast give creditable performances (especially Karen Black) but they all deserve something better. What in Vizinczey was sensual, witty and elegant is — via Kaczender — rendered merely smutty, cute and photogenic. One may forgive *In Praise of Older Women* for its sexual cowardice, but there is little excuse for its mediocrity.

John Hofsess

Robin Spry's DRYING UP THE STREETS

d. Robin Spry, sc. B.A. Cameron, ph. Ken Gregg, ed. Myrtel Virgo, l.p. Len Cariou, Don Francks, Kelvin Butler, August Schellenberg, Jacques Hubert, exec. p. Ralph L. Thomas, p.c. Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (Radio-Canada) 1977, col 16mm, running time 90 minutes.

This is not the "great" film followers of Spry's career have been expecting.

Nevertheless, it is well worth seeing for its uncompromising depiction of the sordid subterranean world of hard drug pushers and junkies, of anxious-to-please pimps and the girls they exploit: the runaways who are lead into drug addiction then forced to pay for

FILM REVIEWS

it by servicing the string of pasty, insatiable customers coughed-up by most North American cities. It's a "sewer" says an undercover man. And it's a vortex of violence to shock anyone, including those who've tripped gaily over the tattered carpets of a Yonge Street massage parlor.

Originally the film was conceived as a 60 minute CBC-TV special, but after thirteen days shooting a feature had been born. (The secret of such fertility should be shared, what with government cutbacks creating a prophylactic atmosphere for future CBC film productions.) What will bring the film to the local cinema is not the occasional flash of bare flesh, but several fine performances and the many levels on which the film works.

Don Francks unquestionably dominates the film. The former CBC song and dance man, a one time drop-out himself (he once appeared in leathers on the Pierre Berton Show, figuratively spinning the shocked host's bow tie at 3,000 rpm), is most convincing as Peter Brennan, a West Coast pharmacology professor who has become a heroin addict in that lifestyle experimentation endemic to Pacific shores. His wife has deserted him, his daughter has run away. Francks, with his gaunt face, balding pate and waist length pony-tail, is so well cast as the archetypal 60's dope scene drop-out that he visually steals almost every scene.

In a quick cutting, opening sequence a hand held camera, shaking with TV news authenticity, discovers Brennan O.D.'ing in the toilet of a greasy spoon. One of the cuts includes a gruesome close-up of him salivating, a first indication this film is not for the squeamish or those socially isolated souls who think that our greatest problem is the future of the monarchy.

The strident music, accompaniment for Brennan's moments of isolation throughout the film, suddenly becomes muzak, and in the first of many changes in rhythm characteristic of the film's structure, the fast cutting is replaced by a moving camera which reveals an antiseptic hospital room. There, Brennan is cold-turkeying it, sandwiched between white sheets. Len Cariou, cool and sophisticated as a crusading newsman in *One Man*, but a little



Len Cariou (left), a narcotics officer tries to enlist heroine addict Peter Brennan, played by Don Franks, to help break a narcotic ring

worldly to play RCMP officer, Larry, exploits Brennan's helplessness, not unlike the way the pimps exploit their girls. Larry shows lurid slides of a girl forced into masochistic acts to support her habit, hinting she may be Brennan's runaway daughter.

It is then the bones of the plot are revealed: the mounties, demonstrating questionable ethics at once similar to Kojak but all too believable in light of the McDonald Commission inquiry, will help Brennan find his daughter — if he helps them break a dope ring and identify the king-pin.

In an inspired bit of filmmaking Larry exits, leaving the projector on automatic ostensibly to give Brennan time for a decision. The slides, previously shown mostly at comfortable home

viewing distance, now become a quick cutting montage, bloody details bludgeoning the viewer as they do Brennan. No soft-sell consciousness raising is this. When a family snapshot snaps by, Brennan's decision is a foregone conclusion.

After possibly the briefest cross-Canada bus trip for a Canadian film — no shots of the Rockies or the prairies — Francks disembarks before Toronto's eternally "new" city hall, takes one last look at his daughter's photograph and symbolically rips it up.

Soon after his arrival but not before a greeting committee of police brutalizes then briefly jails him, Brennan is slowly sucked into the sewer. It's apparently easy if the hang-outs are known, if the right questions are asked, and as is so often the case, if a contact

has been made while rehabilitating in Okala.

Through meetings in topless bars, featuring tasteless shows almost comic on screen, Brennan's circle of contacts grow. They lead him into violence — a jewellery store robbery, ridding the street of "Frenchie" competition — and then into employment suited to his professional training, cutting drugs for street distribution. But he reveals a sort of Hawksian ethics: he only cuts the drugs with pure materials, and refuses to bend when grilled about the high costs.

These developments are intercut with Brennan's long treks through nameless streets, effectively building suspense while he searches documentarily filmed passersby for the face of his daughter. Often, he visits the methadone maintenance clinic to exchange his urine sample for his surrogate drug and to report his findings to Larry, disguised as a doctor. "Dr. Fraud" Brennan puns on their first meeting, one of many one-liners offering comic relief. The effective one liner, *de rigueur* in the fast cutting TV milieu, seems a forte of scriptwriter B.A. Cameron. When Brennan's virility is questioned, one character quips "He couldn't get it up with spray starch and splints."

During an early restaurant stop he witnesses a theft from a car. In what at first appears to be a documentary long shot, a girl, played by newcomer Sarah Torgov, takes a camera but is caught by a black man, ironically wearing a white hat. Arguing, the two conveniently enter Brennan's restaurant where he overhears the man offer to take the girl home and put her up with the help of his woman. The audience knows the girl, Anne, is the archetypal runaway. Her fate, despite that easily identified with signs of middle class success — beauty, poise and, for a teenager, pimple-free skin — will be that described earlier by Larry.

Predictably, too, her fate becomes entwined with Brennan's. She shows up as a waitress in his haunt, then as a shy, reluctant participant in a topless stage show. At first she is shielded by Shiela, the hooker-with-a-heart-of-gold played by Jayne Eastwood with her usual super competence. But Sheila's shield is as short-lived as Sheila. She

is terminated violently for squealing to the police after refusing to allow her daughter to stand-in for a member of a pedophilic daisy chain, staged with a drugged Anne for the benefit of porn-tographers.

Only an inventory could do justice to the many ways Anne is degraded. At one point she is referred to as a "facility," a term to raise the ire of even a closet feminist. Brennan is aware of this; the fatherly concern he should have shown for his daughter is inexorably transferred to Anne, even as her addiction is slashed into our consciousness by the close-up of needle tracks along her delicate white arm.

Most of this would be straight TV formula, tame or violent enough for Kojak, were it not for Spry's skill and wit in rendering the material. He has such feeling for form, he can make socio-political statements, *nouvelle vague* references, and toss off a few nods to the NFB — all without eroding the entertainment values treasured by the apathetic, unpoliticized "home viewing audience."

In sex and violence Spry tells all but shows only just enough. A man's eye is poked out. Several shootings take place. Using a montage in which shots of perpetrator and victim (always backing away from the camera until stopped by a wall) are intercut with steadily increasing rapidity, Spry never includes the explicit shot of bullets or instrument striking. This shot is filled in by the viewer from that fund of experience informed by the glut of violent photographic images seen daily, or the apparently innate capability of humans to visualize gore. The moment of violence occurs between frames, in the mind of the viewer primed by fast cutting. Where the sharp instrument is used, the thug wielding it says more people will be wearing eye-patches, on the last word there is a witty cut to a fig leaf on an alabaster David in the bar, an eyepatch if ever there was one. Later the same thug says, "The citizens have their police, we have ours." Criminal violence differs little from socially sanctioned violence.

In this bizarre world, where promises to do anything in return for a fix are honored, Anne is put to the test with

the sexually imaginative (or perverted, if you prefer). However, the explicit shot is filled in again by the viewer, who may discover his/her sexual imagination has a wider range than earlier thought. The casting of almost grotesque lesbians seems questionable, perhaps designed to confirm male chauvinist prejudices.

Brennan's treks through the streets are done in long takes, Francks forcing the action towards the camera in another mandatory TV technique which forces the camera to reverse dolly and create an attention grabbing, always changing backdrop. Invariably, these shots are filmed in hazy overcast, a light which mutes the colors and adds a bluish cast expressive of Brennan's alienated state of mind. In these sequences a notable time transition has been used: he stops to study strip joint pictures for his daughter's likeness; there is a cut to a subjective shot, hand held; and when the objective shot follows, it is night. This is smooth, yet, momentarily an expressive disorientation in time.

Several distancing devices are used, also with irony. Several times two large neon yellow A's appear behind Brennan; they grab attention, invite only impossible interpretations. A neon record flashes behind his head, becoming a halo — a crassly commercial one. Later, Brennan is hooded and violently shoved into a back seat, but the low angle composition of the shot emphasizes the "Keep Ontario Beautiful" on the license plate. The plot progresses while with simple juxtaposition Spry criticizes the head-in-the-sand attitude to socially reality manifest by bureaucratic sloganeers.

The plot is resolved neatly, as expected from a made for TV flick, but not without more gut-gripling moments of suspense, the seemingly obligatory chase scene, and the somewhat implausible way Brennan leads police to the king pin's mansion.

Some questions, however, remain. Casting a black (Calvin Butler) as a pimp, white stetson notwithstanding, might confirm the racist prejudices now bubbling below the smug surfaces in Canada — unless this is a marketing ploy for stateside acceptance. Torgov is a remarkable young actress.

FILM REVIEWS

In one scene when she parrots paragraphs from self-help books about giving and sharing, it can be seen how easily the supposed gospel truth in such books can be manipulated to serve any end. Warren Davis, once an official CBC face and voice, suffers from that old Canadian actor's problem of too much TV exposure. (Can you see Peter Kent as Citizen Kane, or Barbara Walters as Lady Macbeth?) And the attention to TV lighting values of 2:1 or 3:1 robs Spry of the expressionistic tools of shadow manipulation.

Drying up the Streets flirts with the skirts of sensationalism, even lifting them at times. It has none of the didacticism of *One Man*: it sensitizes viewers to social problems with shock.

Doug Isaac

R. Martin Walters' MARIE-ANNE

d. R. Martin Walters, sc. Marjorie Morgan, adapt. George Salverson, ph. Reginald Morris, ed. Stanley Frazen, sd. Chris Large, m. Maurice Marshall, l.p. Andrée Pelletier, John Juliana, Gordon Tootoosis, Bill Dowson, David Schurmann, Linda Kupecek, Bill Meilen, Tantoo Martin, p. Fil Fraser, p.c. The Motion Picture Corporation of Alberta 1978, running time 88 minutes.

Marie-Anne is the second feature to be turned out by Edmonton producer Fil Fraser, who made his debut in the Canadian film industry not too long ago with *Why Shoot The Teacher*. Like that film, *Marie-Anne* is a movie shot in Alberta on a subject drawn from local history, and as such it has a peculiar fascination for Alberta audiences. Until Fil Fraser came along, it seemed, people in this part of Canada had never seen themselves or their history fictionalized on the screen — unless it was in the course of an occasional Eastern-financed project, or during one of Hollywood's brief, absurd forays north. Thus the shock of finding that it's possible for *us* to make *real* movies



Marie-Anne and family at Fort Edmonton

about *our* lives and heritage (of course retouching them for painless consumption just like the Americans do) has tended to overwhelm any objective local assessment of the film's actual worth. The Alberta public flocked eagerly to *Why Shoot The Teacher*, as it is now doing to *Marie-Anne*, like proud parents going to watch junior in the school play; and for them the question of how good *Marie-Anne* is when compared to (say) *Pretty Baby* or even to *J.A. Martin Photographe* is likely to appear meaningless in the strictest sense of the term. After all, you just don't look at your own child's performance in the same critical light as you would Glenda Jackson's Hedda Gabler.

Nevertheless, if filmmaking in Western Canada is to escape from parochial smallness of vision, it must be judged

according to criteria just as rigorous as we would apply to any film and it has to be said that by these standards *Why Shoot The Teacher* is an artistic failure enlivened by moments of authenticity and insight, and *Marie-Anne* a movie of no special interest.

Marie-Anne (scripted by Marjorie Morgan and directed by R. Martin Walters) is the story of the first white woman to come to Alberta. In the interests of conveying some idea of a film whose major problem is that it seems completely boneless and insubstantial, I'm going to give a full summary of the scenario — more, perhaps, than you ever wanted to know about

During the lengthy credit sequence we see Baptiste Lagimodière, an agent of the Hudson's Bay Company, frolicking merrily through the autumn woods near Fort Edmonton with his

Indian mate Tantoo in the year 1805. He receives a message that his father has died, and that he must go back to Québec to settle the estate and look after his mother. Upon arrival, he's told by the local parish priest that it's time he married and is furnished with a number of recommendations. A late addition to the list is the priest's housekeeper, Marie-Anne, who bursts into tears and complains to her employer that she's 25 already and headed for a dismal future of spinsterhood and domestic slavery. Remaking her mother's wedding dress, she shows up resplendent at the ball that night, and captures the prince's heart in true Cinderella fashion. Cut to scenes of the early days of their marriage, a happy relationship clouded by Baptiste's yearning to return to the open sky and the prairie. Marie-Anne and her husband go to Fort Edmonton in 1808 and immediately run into difficulties with the Company Factor Mr. Bird, who sees Marie-Anne as a potential precedent for the conversion of the Fort from trading post to settlement — the beginning of the end for the local fur trade. He strikes Baptiste from the Company rolls until his wife is sent back east. Marie-Anne also causes a spectacular disturbance among the local Cree Indians: the jealous Tantoo assaults her and Chief Many Horses wants to buy her. This catastrophe is averted only when she goes out to the Indian camp alone to explain why she can't be sold. Many Horses saves face by adopting her into the tribe as his daughter. This even becomes the too-convenient, not-to-be-examined-too-closely escape from the plot's complexities: Marie-Anne can stay because she's an Indian and Bird has no authority over her movements and now Baptiste can return from his trading mission to join her in an idyllic reunion. This outline of the film's storyline is perhaps misleadingly exhaustive for a movie in which nothing of any consequence ever seems to happen. Certainly there's material here for a good film — but only for a film which wishes to intricately observe the niceties of its characters' behaviour and to dwell with quiet intensity on the beauties of period objects and landscape (as, for example, J.A. Martin does),

not for an up-tempo movie that's half conventional plotting and half historical celebration. The treatment of the characters falls squarely between these two poles, so that we're never sure whether to react to them as emotionally-tangled soap-opera characters or as two-dimensional figures in a historical frieze. Whatever individuality the characters do achieve is attributable mainly to the acting (good performances from John Juliani as Baptiste and, especially, from Andrée Peletier — who almost saves the movie, indeed — as Marie Anne).

As for the historical end of things, the film always looks like exactly what it is — a bunch of actors in brand-new costumes cavorting around the reconstructed Fort Edmonton. There's no sense that the objects we see have ever been used, or the clothing lived in; and no sense of the vastness of the wilderness or the distance from civilization — no sense, in a word, of the harshness and isolation, or of the grandeur, of life as it must have been lived in Alberta 170 years ago.

Nor is this unwelcome atmosphere of a small-scale fancy-dress outing dissipated by director Walters and cameraman Reginald Morris. All the interiors are bathed in second-hand Barry Lyndon firelight amber, and all the exteriors are brightly high-key as if lit for television (which, incidentally, is where Walters must have learned his occasional ugly habit of starting a scene with a closeup of some insignificant object and then doing a slow zoom — out to take in the surroundings). Then there's the minor annoyance of peripheral actors injecting an urban Anglo twang into the French-accented context, and the major annoyance of Maurice Marshall's lightweight music — relentlessly wisful and twee, as if assuring us that everything's going to turn O.K. no matter what temporary misadventures the principals might be enduring.

Maybe I'm being too harsh on Marie-Anne, which is, after all, an unassuming little movie. What need is there to come down hard on a film with such good intentions and such a transparent awareness of its own lack of ambition? But good intentions and polite unambitiousness are the

bane of the English-Canadian film industry, and it seems a pity to watch Fil Fraser heading down the same road without uttering a protest. Of course we can't produce super-slick superproductions, and we shouldn't want to (though I suspect that's what Canadian audiences do secretly want); but neither should we accept limitations of resources as an excuse for weak scripts and bad directional judgement. I'm sure that, like the parents at the school play, Alberta audiences will get a lot of pleasure out of Marie-Anne; but in merely demanding that their child get its lines right and not fall on its face, they will be overlooking a pervasive diffuseness and shallowness in both conception and execution — faults which will be readily apparent to viewers not in the family.

Bill Beard

Ralph Thomas' TYLER

d. Ralph Thomas, sc. Roy MacGregor, ph. Vic Sarin, ed. Ron Wisman, m. Eric Robertson, l.p. R.H. Thompson, Murray Westgate, Sean McCann, Robert McClure, Sonja Smits, exec. p. Ralph L. Thomas, p. David Pears, p.c. Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (Radio-Canada) 1977, col. 16mm, running time 82 minutes.

This low budget, made for TV film, winner of the Montreal Film Festival for the best Canadian film out of competition prize, is a farming story with a bumper crop of paradoxes. It is too realistic to be fantasy: too fantastic to be real. Those given to classifications will find in this film all the features of a fable, a short story exemplifying a principle of human nature and concluding with an epigram. In this case, "Think Canadian First" appears in the last shot on the back of a truck, and in both official languages.

Of course, dealing with any film from a realistic perspective is always risky, since filmmakers from documentaries to experimentalists all lay

FILM REVIEWS

claim to privileged insight into reality. And for most urbanites, except those doing piece work for minimum wage, a realistic depiction of Canadian farming life would resemble the "daze" in the life of Ivan Densinovich. As one farmland refugee has observed, once you've farmed, all else seems to be a vacation. Despite this dark view, supported by recent figures showing a higher per capita tranquilizer and alcohol use in rural areas, many city dwellers dream of the simple country life. Surprisingly, this overtly romantic, often unbelievable and frequently flawed film seems to pander to that dream.

"Surprisingly" is the qualification, since a more penetrating tale might be expected from director and former farm boy, Ralph Thomas, who until recently was associated with CBC's often controversial series, "For the Record." To be sure, real problems facing farmers aren't covered in mulch. Here they have been scripted and cast as stars. These include bureaucratic over-regulation, quota systems which penalize productivity, and financial barriers forcing from the land those young people willing to farm. Indeed, bureaucracy is the villain of the piece.

Any social consciousness raising is over-shadowed by characterizations either larger than life, or too small for it; by a fate so co-operative it must have rehearsed the script; and by a symbolism bordering on poetic overkill, given the complexity of the plot. Several technical faults, certainly not included to give that improvised look esteemed by the European modernists, don't help the film any. What does is the virtuoso performance of R.H. Thompson.

He is superb as Tyler, a post teens farm boy with freckles and red hair (not unlike a rooster's comb), and the charm and ear-lobe-to-shoulder-tip muscles of a budding, farm bred NHL'er (think Canadian). Directorial intent is obvious; early in the film a lingering camera gives Thompson ample opportunity to ham it up. He chug-a-lugs his beer, burps, stuffs a bottle into his belt, and later tosses it into the mailbox, but not before he has impishly "borrowed" money from mom's cookie jar to get drunk. This he does behind the woodpile with the neighbors'

boys, who've got a deluxe shag wagon and a hankering to get from some jail-bait what they used to get from her "friendly" older sister. Tyler is naughty but loveable. For him farm work is play, and play, in keeping with the paradoxes, is undertaken with grim determination easily confused with gusto.

The film opens with a static post-card shot of a white farm building. In one continuous long take, the camera moves forward à la Renoir to re-frame on his father, Archie (Murray Westgate), who walks down a driveway and nails a For Sale sign on a tree. When a distant Tyler yells "Goddamn you!" Archie poignantly turns to the camera and mutters, "Maybe he already has." The film has opened with a curse, a conflict and cynicism. Spectator

interest is piqued, then effectively dis-oriented in the fast cutting sequence following: the shot proves to be a subjective view of Tyler's sister's boyfriend, but before this is ascertained a rush of people has poured from the house with beer commercial enthusiasm, and Tyler has leaped on his motorcycle to race up a hill.

Hills have served as symbols before, and, thinking Canadian, the slag heap in *Mon Oncle Antoine* comes to mind. It was used subtly to begin or end the occasional sequence, a never over-worked temporal sign which also visually resembled the pile of sand in an hour-glass. But Tyler's hill, when he's at one with his machine, is the challenge of nature he must overcome to re-affirm his strength of character, his na-



R. H. Thomson in his "virtuoso performance" as Tyler, a mythic Canadian character

tural if some what romantic ability to take on the toughest challenge and win. It can almost be imagined that with each piston throb he mutters, "I think I can, I think I can...." It is simplistic but significant that the college educated boyfriend, who's hands are as soft as a "baby's bum," chooses that hill for the sight of his home. But later, when he tries to emulate Tyler and make it on the bike, he fails — tragically.

An early demonstration of this aspect of Tyler's character is essential to the plot. Although Archie still has the strength and the will to win the log-sawing contest for the twelfth year in a row (like father, like son, but a poorly cut sequence in which the wrong sawblade is ahead at the end), he has to sell the farm. His wife (Kay Hawtrey, the visual embodiment of wood stove warmed maternalism) is ailing, while each year means \$5,000 more in debt, hard to take when weekly postcards beckon him to retirement in a Florida trailer camp. The quota system penalizes Archie financially if he produces too much milk, but with characteristic rural pride he prefers debts to cutting back "while people are starvin'" in the world." Tyler asks to be given first chance to buy the farm and a skeptical Archie agrees.

Tyler visits the farm credit bureau where an agriculture department bureaucrat (Dennis Hayes, so suave he'd easily outshine Eugene Whalen) states that before they could grant him the mortgage, Tyler would have to raise \$30,000 in one month as proof of the farm's productivity. As Tyler leaves, the camera shifts focus to a government poster: Where in the World is Your Dream?

With a skill to turn a commodity broker green with envy, Tyler begins to hustle up the cash. He sells everything he can get his hands on, including the truck he's lovingly restored, and the steers he's raised. He undercuts the going rate to get fence building contracts. When he's short, he turns to back road deals selling un-pasteurized milk — something to think about the next time you buy milk at loss-leader prices. The viewer begins to believe Tyler will make it, just as he always makes it up the hill.

With only a few days left and a few thousand short, Tyler goes to gamble on the cock-fights. Getting there involves a ritual which would do justice to the Klu Klux Klan. The outcome, again in keeping with the paradoxes, requires and overly benign fate; it is about as unbelievable as the way the cockfight is depicted. The preliminaries for each bout are staged for the camera to the point where the roosters are brought in. Then footage obviously taken elsewhere is intercut in all its bloody detail with cut-aways to the gambler. It seems that to keep the film audience entertained the fight can't be alluded to, it must be shown.

The film is not without wit. Tyler takes time from his hustling to dump a pail of milk over the head of a supercilious bureaucrat, a kind of liquid pie in the face. When told his sister has broken off her engagement with her joe-college boyfriend (a caricature of the formally educated who in trying to be one of the boys succeeds only in appearing condescending), Tyler says with a paradoxical blend of urbanity and farmyard forthrightness that the last time he saw them they seemed ready to consummate the marriage. Most hilarious is Tyler's treatment of the city "rubes" who come to look over the farm: the man is dressed in shorts and Adidas, his wife looks ready for a cocktail party. In this sequence, Tyler is filmed upward from below and framed within the frame by a doorway, a perspective to express his dominance in the scene as he hints the neighbor may be a child molestor. Tyler's natural moxie transcends city sophistication as it does his future brother-in-law's formal education, a neat reversal of the country bumpkin stereotype.

But Tyler loses, although he's heroically raised the cash. The credit official, who was also at the cockfight, could recommend the loan, but the government regulations which require an MBA even to read, let alone understand, ultimately won't allow types like Tyler to be financed. The official, whose sudden withdrawal of support is inadequately explained, even mentions that if Tyler had a degree... well... maybe his chances would be better.

A drinking bout follows, a traditional favorite of American directors unwill or unable to articulate dramatically deep emotions arising from setbacks or tragedy. In one sequence, faulty continuity is more intriguing than the action: a baby bottle (paradoxically a nice touch) is almost empty of liquor in one shot, in the next it is almost full, yet no temporal ellipsis has been implied. Similarly, in one last self-affirmation, Tyler takes a run up the hill. He makes it to the top, but not without the assistance of a hand which flashes in from off-camera to grab the wheelfork, presumably a hand from the director or maybe even God. (Then again, within the given context of the film, at times the two are indistinguishable.)



Tyler, the face of a young man whose dreams are shattered

A reflection of its construction or, perhaps, the low budget, this film elicits paradoxical responses. It lacks the self-evident style of *Drying up the Streets*, and in its efforts to be simple, Tyler is often simplistic. Characters tend to be caricatures, but Thompson as Tyler is almost mythic, the kind of character Canadian film needs. Farmers' problems have indeed been underlined, but the picture of their lifestyle smacks of the TV *Waltons*, a closely knit family circled together like musk oxen (think Canadian) against a hostile outside world. Eric Robertson's music evokes country without, thankfully, step-dancing through Tommy Hunter territory.

Not to be forgotten is that Tyler was made for TV. And for all its faults, it far surpasses the flicker and flash of most made for the tube mass entertainment.

Doug Isaac

FILM REVIEWS

Peter Collinson's TOMORROW NEVER COMES

d. Peter Collinson, sc. David Pursall and Jack Seddon, adapt. Sydney Banks, ph. François Protat, ed. John Shirley, sd. Brian Simmons, sd. ed. Peter Best, a.d. Michel Proulx, set dec. Normand Sarrazin, cost. Shura Cohen, l.p. Olivier Reed, Susan George, Raymond Burr, John Ireland, Stephen McHattie, Donald Pleasence, Paul Koslo, Cec Linder, Richard Donat, Dolores Etienne, Sammy Snyder, Jane Eastwood, Mario Di Iorio, Stephen Mendel, Walter Massey, Earl Pennington, Jack Fisher, p. Julian Melzack and Michael Klinger, assoc. p. Denis Héroux and Bob Sterne, p. manager. Robert Ménard, p.c. Classic Films Industries Ltd. 1977, col. 35mm, running time 106 minutes.

When Canada becomes involved in a co-production deal and it turns out to be very very good, no one remembers Canada's involvement in the project. A *Special Day* is considered to be an Italian-made film and *Violette Nozière*, which won a well-deserved best actress award for Isabelle Huppert at this year's Cannes Film Festival, is considered to be a French film. Yet, Canada has input in both.

However, when a co-production turns into an abysmal schmozzle, everyone conveniently forgets the other party's involvement and remembers only Canada's.

Such is the case with *Tomorrow Never Comes*, a feeble police melodrama that makes *Dragnet* seem like intelligent, thought-provoking drama. Produced by Canada's wiz-kid Julian Melzack and Britain's Michael Klinger, one has to wonder what this pair of enterprising backer ever saw in the property in the first place.

The film, directed by Peter Collinson, blends together several fashionable topics that are popular both in the movies and in real life: the disillusioned cop, urban violence, hostage-taking and the evil machinations of local authorities. The shimmer of social comment is present but, under Collinson's direction, it lies dormant.

As the credits roll up on the screen and a suitably drippy ballad sung by Matt Monroe drones in the background, a young man returns home, after months away, to reclaim his girl friend. But he flies into a tizzy when he finds out that she has jilted him in favor of the town's highfalutin' influential bigwig who owns everything and everyone. Following a barroom brawl, Frank — that's our hero — suffers a bump on the noggin, goes bananas, finds Janie — that's our heroine — living in the big shot's beach cabana, terrorizes her maid, accidentally shoots a cop, takes Janie hostage; and the scene is set more or less.

Meanwhile, on the other side of town, the local men-in-blue are singing 'For He's A Jolly Good Fellow' to their lieutenant who isn't jolly and who is leaving because he's "weary and revolted by the violence and brutality of modern police work," according to the press notes. The humane lieutenant, played by Oliver Reed, rather than just saying goodbye, decides to take control of the erupting hostage drama. (Have you noticed that newspapers love to call these events "hostage dramas" or "hostage incidents", neither of which sounds appropriate.)

At 90 unrelenting minutes, *Tomorrow Never Comes* is at least 60 minutes too long and never rises above being a made-for-television movie, on the Kojak level. But that comparison may not be totally fair since Kojak did pack a wallop from time to time. And Kojak had the driving presence of Telly Savalas who also played a cop tired of corruption. Reed's character bows out like a martyr; Savalas accepts it as a universal, inescapable, fact of life.

Peter Collinson has directed the film in a straight-forward no-nonsense style and that, oddly enough, is the biggest fault of the film. In a time when movie making has become over-written and over-produced, a simple story shooting right from the hip should be welcomed. But the sterility of the plot and its stylistic obviousness robs the film of any high-voltage impact it might have had. Being straight-forward is one thing; being a one-note drama is quite another matter.

What should be a gripping film fraught with tension, something along the lines of *Experiment In Terror*, becomes a talky overlong movie devoid of any suspense. The title telegraphs the conclusion.



Holed-up in a beach cabana, Janie (Susan George) comforts her kidnapper and x-lover, Frank (Stephen McHattie)

Reed, the patient, understanding cop, wants to solve the situation as peacefully as possible. An over-zealous plain clothes officer (Paul Kosto) would just as soon use brutish SWAT-tactics, and the crowd that gathers only wants to see blood, anybody's blood.

Collinson's style lacks subtlety. The police, except Reed are portrayed as trigger-happy gunslingers. The crowd, one aspect that's overdone makes asinine comments like "where is Telly Savalas" thinking it's a television shoot, and orders snacks as the drama drags on. It's all so heavy-handed. But when Raymond Burr, as the corrupt commissioner and paid flunky of Mr. Big, pops in on the siege scene dressed all in black, that's too much. The "oh-nos" are audible.

Directors, too often, resort to the flashback in narratives but here, not only would flashbacks be ideal, they are essential. We never really get a feeling for the characters we're dealing with, especially Janie and Frank, who are hold up in the cabana. Why did Frank leave for so long? Did he really expect Janie to hang around for him? Why did she go off with Mr. Lotta Bucks? Was she attracted by \$\$\$\$ only? During the siege, she pleads with Frank and tells him she still loves him, but does she mean it? And if she does, why?

Susan George has so little material to work with the only thing she can do is look puffy and terrified, and sob on cue. It's not a terrific performance but it's like the Olivia Newton-John role in *Grease*, I'm not sure any actress could do much better.

Stephen McHattie, who did a splendid job in the TV James Dean Portrait and made less of a splash in *Grey Lady Down*, does remarkably well with the typical stereotyped-crazy-man role. He fluctuates nicely between the irrational ravings of a bonafide madman and the fuzzy bewilderment of a youth trapped in a situation he doesn't fully comprehend. McHattie keeps the built-in histrionics of the part in check.

The other performers do okay with one-dimensional characterizations but special attention has to be drawn to Donald Pleasance, who's appearing in

anything that remotely resembles a Canadian film. Pleasance contributes one of the nuttiest pieces of over-acting I've ever seen on film. He plays the town doctor who gives his two-cents worth concerning Frank's head injury and explains why he's not responsible. Shabbily dressed to look like a cousin of Columbo, Pleasance does the most amazing things with his lips and a cigarette. It's as though he's mugging for the camera and Collinson hasn't noticed — it's difficult to believe he ordered this. Even when he's in the background, Pleasance appears to be doing a cross between Inspector Clouzot and Claude Chabrol. While he could be accused of blatant over-acting, I prefer to think of it as a witty performance by an astute actor who recognizes the fact that he's in a stinker and wishes to surface with his career in tact.

Even though David Pursall and Jack Seddon's screenplay fails to appeal to the intellect, *Tomorrow Never Comes* is a visually impressive film. François Protat's cinematography conveys both the heat of the situation and the heat of the day, a feat which should not be underestimated considering the entire shoot was plagued with numerous problems, including inclement weather, from beginning to end.

Lee Rolfe

Peter Carter's HIGH BALLIN'

d. Peter Carter, asst. d. Tony Thatcher, sc. Paul Edwards, ph. Rene Verzier, sp. ph. effects Richard Helmer, sup. ed. Eric Wrate, sd. Jim Hopkins, sd. ed. Douglas Branton, a.d. Claude Bonnière, m. Paul Hoffert, l.p. Peter Fonda, Jerry Reed, Helen Shaver, Chris Wiggins, David Ferry, Christopher Langevin, Mary Pirie, Kay Havtrey, Alan Crofoot, John Friesen, Les Carlson, Cec Linder, Eric House, Myrna Lorrie, assoc. p. Stanley Chase, William Hayward, p. Jon Slan, p. manager, Marilyn Stonehouse, p.c. Jon Slan Productions Inc (1977), col. 35mm, running time 100 minutes, dist. Ambassador Films Limited.

The advertising copy for *High-Ballin'*, which was prepared by the

U.S. distributor American-International Pictures, does not inspire confidence in the merits of this picture, nor does it give any indication of its Canadian origins and location. Indeed, the poster is clearly designed to exploit the similarities between this film and Hal Needham's immensely profitable *Smokey and the Bandit*. It is certainly true that with this film producer Jon Slan and director Peter Carter firmly place themselves on the commercial or "Hollywood North" side of Canadian film, but this should not be seen as a condemnation. The test of a film like this should be whether it succeeds as entertainment and not its nationality.

The action-adventure genre is much more vulnerable than most other types of movies to either pretentiousness and verbosity on the one hand or triviality and mindlessness on the other, and recent examples of these can easily be found. Carter himself fell victim to the pretentious style in the boring *Rituals*. It did, however, teach him an important lesson, which he consistently attempts to apply in the present film; in the absence of a budget that can allow the plethora of stunts and effects of a *Jaws*, a *French Connection* or a *Smokey and the Bandit*, the best way to make an action film that works is to return to the virtues of the western, and aim for straightforwardness and simplicity. If the story is strong enough, these features should be enough — theoretically — to engage the audience.

The question is, does *High Ballin'* work on these terms? The unoriginal script, by Paul Edwards from a story by Richard Robinson and Stephen Schrenk, gives little grounds for optimism. A group of independent truckers, led by Duke Boykin (Jerry Reed), are being harrassed by a gang of high-jackers under the command of a gun-toting tough named Harvey (David Ferry), and bankrolled by the local cargo magnate, King Carroll (Chris Wiggins). Into their midst comes an old friend of Duke's, a reticent and upright ex-motorcycle stuntman with the enigmatic name of Rane (Peter Fonda), who, after some initial hesitation, agrees to help Duke and his buddies. If this sounds familiar, it should, because what Edwards, Ro-

FILM REVIEWS

binson and Schrenk (with, apparently, some input from Fonda as well) have presented is a modernized version of *Shane*. Boykin even has a hero-worshipping son named Tanker (Christopher Langevin), to parallel the role played by Brandon DeWilde in George Steven's film.

Fortunately, this cliché-studded prescription for bathos is offset by the tight control Carter maintains on the story at the outset. In sharp contrast to his direction of *Rituals*, he does not let the movement of the main plot slow down. In this, he is helped by competent performances from the actors. Jerry Reed — for once out of the shadow of Burt Reynolds — gives his standard good-ol'-boy characterization in a comfortable and slyly humorous manner. He is well aided by a group of familiar faces — John Friesen, Alan Crofoot, Mary Pirie, Kay Havtrey, Cec Linder, Eric House — who represent some of the cream of Canadian character actors (whom it is nice to see employed in something other than commercials). Christopher Langevin's Tanker neatly avoids soppy sentimentality.

The villains, however, do not fare as well. Chris Wiggins is his usual solid self, but somewhat ridiculous with his vaguely Texas accent, an obvious black stetson, and a string tie which he also wears in bed. David Ferry's Harvey starts out promisingly with a sort of quiet menace, but he degenerates by the end into the type of twitchiness that even Bruce Dern is trying to abandon.

The key character in *High-Ballin'* however, is Peter Fonda's Rane, and it is with him that Carter's balancing act begins to go awry. In the straight action scenes, such as the chase where Rane hurls some old cars down on the pursuing highjackers, or the classic fight in a dimly lit barnlike barroom, Fonda handles himself with reasonable dispatch. But, in the more reflective moments, his performance begins to come apart. There are times when Rane seems a sadly eviscerated version of Wyatt from *Easy Rider*. No longer the proto-hippy, existential searcher, Fonda's character is now merely "lookin' for something," having quit his stunt riding for the most pragmatic of reasons



Rane (Peter Fonda) comes to the aid of independant trucker, Duke Boykin (Jerry Reed) laid low in a shoot-out

— though he broke "all them records," as he tells Tanker, he also broke "all them bones." At other times Fonda affects the upright innocence characteristic of his father (whom he increasingly resembles physically), or a most disconcerting John Wayne drawl.

It is in the romantic subplot, a traditional bugbear of action films, that *High-Ballin'* really falls apart. Helen Shaver begins very strongly as Pickup, a fiercely independent semi-driver with a dry sense of humour. Her wit helps to obscure the banalities of the script until, for some reason, she takes after Rane (she accurately describes him as "really slow"). The love scene that follows almost brings the film to a grinding halt, as Fonda exhibits a languidity worthy of Keith Carradine, and Shaver is not much better. Carter tries to get the momentum going again (Harvey blasts in with a machine gun), but from this point the flaws in the script become more noticeable, until the climactic shootout scene in which the western motif takes over completely as Rane and Harvey face each other with Pickup looking on like a damsel

in distress. Unlike Rane, however, Peter Carter has lost his fight with bathos.

What then is the answer to the question 'Does *High-Ballin'* work?' A qualified 'yes' is in order. The action audience will tolerate quite a bit, and it is to Carter's credit that, until the ending, he does not talk down to them or insult their intelligence. He gives them a reasonably exciting story and handles his stunts and effects with restraint.

As for its value as a Canadian production, that is a more problematical matter. *High-Ballin'* shows that Canadian technicians and actors can compete in this fundamentally American genre. Helen Shaver's career in particular will hopefully profit by the international exposure she will get here. And while it might confuse audiences in Texas or Alabama to see Canadian flags, Ontario licence plates, and maple leaves on policemen's caps, it is refreshing to see that the paranoia of our filmmakers against showing distinctive Canadian symbols is beginning to lift. Perhaps someday it might be unnecessary.

J. Paul Costabile

"THERE AIN'T NO FLIES ON US"

d. Tony Douglas, ph. Dennis Miller and Robert Fresco, ed. Jack Schoon, cfe. sd. Ian Hendry, sd. ed. David Leach, p. Tony Douglas, produced for the Ontario Society for Crippled Children, the Easter Seal people. This film was made possible by a generous grant from the Hospital for Sick Children foundation, p. manager, Elaine Jaques, p.c. Tony Douglas Associates Ltd. 1977, col. 16mm, running time 26 minutes.

There Ain't No Flies On Us is a film about sports and recreation programs for young people who are disabled or handicapped.

It's a film about having a good time with your friends, a film about camping, bowling, skiing, basketball, horseback riding and about the campfire songs we all remember from our childhood.

At the same time, it's also a film about the things you have to deal with when you are both young and also handicapped or disabled. The people in the film talk about these things in their own words.

For example, among the people we meet is a high school student named Carla Patterson, who had her leg amputated because of cancer. Like Nadia De Franco, in Beverly Shaffer's National Film Board film *I'll Find a Way*, Carla speaks candidly about being handicapped, and about how she prefers to be treated by others.

She explains "Nobody really wanted to talk, to say anything about my leg. My friends were so shocked when I talked about my fake leg. They were really surprised to hear me say anything."

Another young woman we meet in the film is Linda Sutton who has cerebral palsy which affects her walking. In one sequence, she tells how much she enjoys skiing with her friends.

"When I'm going down the hill," she remarks, "I don't really feel handicapped. I (just) worry about falling. I want to look as good as everybody



A reflective moment in *There Ain't No Flies On Us*

else. I'm enjoying myself and that's what I like about skiing.

"You don't," she says at another point, "want people to feel sorry for you."

In the film, which Tony Douglas made for the Ontario Society for Crippled Children (with funding from the Hospital for Sick Children Foundation in Toronto), we also meet David Fugeman. Like Linda Sutton, David has cerebral palsy. In his case it affects his speech as well as his gait. He talks, slowly and with an effort, about how much handicapped kids enjoy having some sport or activity that offers a change from daily routine. David enjoys building model airplanes and skiing.

We also meet Glenn Hibbert, who is handicapped by a weakness in the joints, the result of muscular dystrophy. In the film we see his refereeing a spirited game of wheelchair basketball. "I'm not as strong as other members of the team," he comments. "I do play about as many games as they do but just different sorts."

Glenn, like a number of his friends at Sunny View Public School in Toronto, appears in both this film and also in the *I'll Find a Way*. In fact, the two films complement each other admirably, with Beverly Shaffer's film concentrating on one person, nine-year-old Nadia De Franco, in particular, and with *There Ain't No Flies On Us* introducing

reducing the viewer to various energetic and engaging handicapped young people.

In another scene we meet several young bowling enthusiasts who are enjoying that sport thanks to a piece of equipment that enables them to aim at the bowling pins from their wheelchairs. This bowling sequence sums up, with a particular force and clarity, what this film is about.

The film is a remarkable piece of work — in purely cinematic terms and in terms of its message as a sponsored film. It's held together by a solid sense of structure; the editing is well-paced; the transitions work; and even the color quality and the camera angles enhance the overall effect.

The film successfully conveys its message about sports and recreation without creating the "distancing effect" that can occur when handicaps or disabilities are discussed abstractly such that the audience relates to labels instead of to disabled, fellow human beings. Through his characteristic honesty, openness and directness (qualities that are evident in his earlier films, such as in *I'm the Same as Everyone Else*, which he made for the Toronto Epilepsy Association), — Tony Douglas avoids "distancing" the subject matter — and subjects — of this film and abstains from the contrived sentimentality with which filmmakers often approach the handicapped.

Jaan Pill

NO...

d. John Stoneman, ph. John Stoneman, ed. William Carter, m. Gustav Holst "Planet Suite" (Saturn), p.c. Mako Films Ltd. 1977, col. 16mm, running time 6 minutes.

To describe in words the damage man has done to his planet could take thousands of pages and many hours. John Stoneman has attempted to do it without words, and in just six minutes, using a series of skillfully juxtaposed images and sounds. The film is both a very personal statement about the horror of man's rape of the earth, and a plea for the protection and preservation of one of the last relatively untouched areas, the oceans. It is also, incidentally, an expression of the joys of being a diver.

In the first three or four minutes the camera glides through a beautiful underwater landscape of green and blue, past waving sea fans and strange white coral shapes. We slowly drift amongst glittering schools of jacks as they twist and turn in the water, and pause by a single silvery barracuda looking suspicious as barracudas usually do. The smoothness of the camera work makes us feel a part of the fluid, rippling environment. And the music from Gustav Holst's "Planet Suite" is a well-chosen complement to the sense of pleasure and enchantment we get from this unfamiliar and peaceful world.

But the music occasionally has ominous overtones, creating a mild tension that subconsciously prepares us for what follows: a sudden direct cut to distressingly familiar scenes of our everyday life... factories blasting black chemical smoke, cars bumper to bumper in the grey air, masses of people jostling each other on concrete sidewalks, dead animals lying amongst piles of foul garbage. The images are a sharp and painful contrast to what has just filled the screen a moment before. So, when the divers plunge back into that cool, clear water and we follow them down again into the ocean, it is with a sense of relief and escape and even thankfulness.

It is a simple statement that would be hard for anyone to disagree with,



John Stoneman comes up for a coffee-break

especially in the climate created by recent massive oil spills, and stories of whale atrocities and careless mining of the ocean floor. The film could be accused of being not only simple, but simplistic, of avoiding an exploration of the complex reasons behind why man persists in destroying his own environment. Stoneman as a diver and environmental filmmaker must surely be aware of these complexities. He has chosen instead to express the dilemma in as brief, direct and uncluttered a film as possible. No long explanations, no involved rationalizations, no gimmicks, just the simple visual impact that tells its own sad story. My only quarrel with the film is that the converted can only nod and agree, but for the unconverted or unaware, it does not have nearly enough impact. Certainly not enough to change any minds.

Penelope Hynam

THIS FILM IS ABOUT RAPE

d. Bonnie Kreps, ph. Jan-Marie Martell, ed. Haida Paul, p. Bonnie Kreps, p.c. Chesire Films Production, 1978, running time 29 minutes, dist. Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Center (Toronto).

By now, Bonnie Kreps is well-known as a feminist filmmaker in Canada. Her short films *After the Vote*, *Portrait Of My Mother*, and a series of *Working Mothers* films made for the NFB have often been used as the focus for discussion in women's groups and have been seen in festivals in both Canada and the U.S. One aspect of her filmmaking style is the attention she pays to the objects and personal surroundings of her interviewees, letting these details reveal characters, establish mood. It works quite effectively for the opening of her latest film *This Film Is About Rape*. On the soundtrack we hear a woman telling of her experience as the victim of an attempted rape, while we see shots of a meticulous and slightly frilly living-room decor — flowered wallpaper, family snapshots in their gilt dimestore frames, plants, and a doll in a bright, crocheted dress. Only after we have seen her personal physical surroundings, her living space, do we see the woman herself — a slim, elderly lady wearing spectacles who is speaking about the aggressive invasion of her body by a rapist. The uncomfortably jarring relationship between sound and image works well to prepare us for the shock of recognizing this woman's age, thereby dispelling any notions about the sexual provocation by rape victims. The film later informs us that rapists act on "the opportunity of the moment" rather than on the desirability of the victim, and an interview with a convicted rapist brings out the admission that "the appearance of the woman had nothing to do with it."

What is perhaps most moving about the opening interview in this film is that the woman can discuss her own ordeal calmly and clearly, but breaks into tears when telling of her daughter's rape in years past. Compassion for

another takes precedence over concern for herself — a theme introduced here and carried subtly throughout the film. It is this very desire to be kind, compassionate and considerate of others which emerges as a central vulnerability in women — a sad commentary on the state of our society. A female therapist involved in a penal program to reform rapists tells us that “rapists act out the male cultural value system, the masculine mystique of being sexually dominant and powerful.”

The film foregoes analysis of this value system and its resultant male mystique and instead focuses on practical methods for dealing with potentially hazardous situations. It is an understandable focus for the film, although it leaves the causes of rape shrouded in shadow, as are the two rapists interviewed in the film. I, for one, was left with the vaguely helpless and paranoiac feeling that the urge to rape must be like some disease which permeates the atmosphere and can overtake any man, any time. (Perhaps it is!) In any case, we are told that rapists come from all walks of life, are usually men less than thirty years of age, and that according to statistics a rape occurs every seventeen minutes, the victims ranging from infancy to advanced old age.

In such an atmosphere, an undeniable first priority must be the ability of women to handle dangerous situations. Fortunately, the film concentrates on both bodily self-defense and emotional self-control, since so often it is possible to stop aggression from escalating beyond the level of conversation. Thus, a particularly fascinating scene involves several women in a classroom situation, learning how to handle unwanted conversations instigated by strangers. As well, we are urged to rely on our intuitive and physical signals that alert us to danger. **This Film Is About Rape** should be shown in our schools, perhaps in a double-bill with Hanig and Roberts' documentary **Men's Lives**, or with Holly Dale and Janis Cole's **Thin Line**.

Joyce Nelson

THIN LINE

d. Holly Dale & Janis Cole, ph. John Clement and Joe Sutherland, p. Holly Dale & Janis Cole, 1977, col. 16mm, running time 32 minutes, dist. Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Center (Toronto).

Filmmakers Holly Dale and Janis Cole received a glowing write-up in the June *Saturday Night* magazine where Marshall Delaney briefly reviewed their four short documentary films, including **Thin Line**. He called this film their “big accomplishment” so far, and it is indeed a remarkable achievement, given the difficult nature of its subject — the workings of the Ontario hospital for the criminally insane at Penetanguishene.

Throughout, the filmmakers seem intent on changing any misconceptions we might have of either the inmates or the institution. At one point they include shots of the long corridors echoing with the haunting sound of screaming voices, as though in recognition that this is to be expected is such a place. Instead, the filmmakers, concentrate on articulate men able to analyze their problems, admit their weaknesses, and arrive at an understanding of the social and psychological forces which lead to their criminal acts. Revealingly, most of the men talk about intolerable early childhoods within a loveless milieu, particularly lacking in paternal love. Again and again we hear of absent or uncaring fathers. To stress this point, the filmmakers have included an interview with an inmate's mother, who describes the intolerable burden she has been forced to carry in raising her eight children almost single-handedly.

The need for mutual caring between men is further revealed in the therapeutic methods explored in the film. Emotional release — induced by alcohol, drugs, or whatever is necessary — takes place within an arena of affection carefully monitored by other inmates. This space, called the Capsule, provides an intense therapy session which is video-taped for later replay to the individual involved, along with the notes and comments of the friends who

have accompanied him. Every inmate shown in the film wears dark sunglasses, probably to conceal his identity from the camera; nevertheless, this particular article of personal attire effectively suggests the concealment, the refusal to be open with others which is a major problem discussed by the men.

As I recall, there is not one interview with administrator, therapist or guard in this film. Rather, the inmates themselves assess the benefits of this special therapeutic program, and speak of the need for reform in the rest of the penal system. They are especially critical of the hostile behaviour of guards in most maximum security prisons, where, as one man puts it, “you have the worst with the worst.” What is stressed in this film is the key role that love plays in every level of life. The remarkable achievement of **Thin Line** is the filmmakers' ability to reveal love working in this most desperate of places.

Joyce Nelson

SUCCESS STORY

d. John J. Carey ARPS, sc. Dorothy K. Carey, ph. John J. Carey, ed. Ralph C. Brunjes CFE, sd. ed. David Appleby, sd. rec. R.C. Carey, m. Al Brown, narr. Cy Strange, titles John Leach Associates, tech. consultant Dr. Maurice V. Smith, p. John J. Carey, col. 16mm, 1977, running time 27 minutes.

The challenge that faces an educational filmmaker, especially when dealing with a subject as complex as entomology (the study of insects), is to make a film that is informative and instructive without being either too ponderous or too simplistic. In these two short works, Jack Carey meets the challenge with the skill and care one expects from his lifelong interest in nature and more than twenty years of experience as a photographer and producer of nature films.

Success Story, which won the International Award at the 1978 National



John J. Carey (left) receives the International Award for his film, *Success Story*, at the 1978 National Educational Film Festival, Oakland, California

Educational Film Festival in Oakland California, begins with the premise that, from an evolutionary standpoint, the insects are the most successful creatures on earth, and proceeds in six segments to show why this is so. Each of these deals with a different aspect of the life cycle and behaviour of the various species, and Carey chooses insects which best dramatize these aspects. Thus, butterflies are used to provide an example of metamorphosis, the ant lion is used to demonstrate a method of food gathering and the lacewing fly larva shows the skill with which these tiny creatures camouflage themselves. To Carey's knowledge, this is the first time that this particular phenomenon has been photographed. Among the social insects, honey bees (the subject of two of Carey's earlier films) are shown as having the most sophisticated means of caring for their young and of protecting themselves in the winter.

The proportion of time invested in making a film like *Success Story* far exceeds the actual length of the end result. Almost ten years of work went into this film's 27 minutes, for reasons that are not always evident. This type of photography, dependent as it is on circumstances that are often

uncontrollable, such as the close-up work with insects, requires above all a lot of patience. Carey does his own camera work. Except for some judicious time lapse sequences that graphically show the metamorphosis process, he does not use special visual effects. But much time was required to mix the natural sounds and the unobtrusive musical score that are used to good effect.

BRING 'EM BACK ALIVE

d. John J. Carey ARPS, ph. John J. Carey, ed. Ralph C. Brunjes, sd. ed. Gierry Quinney, sd. rec. R.C. Carey, narr: Cy Strange, tech. consultant: Dr. Maurice V. Smith, p. John J. Carey, col. 16mm, 1978, running time 11 minutes.

Bring 'Em Back Alive, less overtly "educational" than *Success Story*, is aimed at a younger audience, and is designed as an introduction to insect collecting as both a school assignment and a hobby. Carey uses three youngsters to provide some audience identification, an important point to con-

sider when making a film for children. Using this framework, he shows that, while the collecting expeditions of an organization like the Royal Ontario Museum are sophisticated and expensive, students can start collecting with little or no money. He then follows the three collectors, as they prepare for their expedition, the expedition itself (with some useful asides on proper precautions to be taken in the woods), and the insects that they find. From here on, the material follows that of *Success Story* (life cycle and metamorphosis), but on a somewhat simpler level. Lastly, the youngsters release their fully developed insects. Carey attaches considerable importance to this last action, for he does not believe that insects should be mounted as trophies.

Both films are well narrated by Cy Strange, whose delivery neatly avoids verbosity or cuteness. Perhaps the only unfortunate metaphor is a reference to insects engaging in "chemical warfare." Carey and his technical advisor, Dr. Maurice Smith of the University of Guelph (an authority on honey bees), have also written a highly informative and practical teacher's guide for each film. It is to be hoped that Carey's interest in and respect for insect life will be conveyed to students by these films.

J. Paul Costabile

ADVERTISING

Art Gallery of Ontario	p.7
Alberta	p.33
Arri Nagra	p.9
Alpha Cine Service	p.7
Arthur Winkler, CLU	p.9
Astral Bellevue Pathé	p.2
Bonded Services International	p.33
Cinema Productions	p.9
Film Opticals of Canada	p.7
Kingsway Film Equipment	p.5
Kodak	p.8
Mako Films Ltd.	p.9
M.S. Services	p.7
National Film Board	p.83
Rosebud Films	p.33
Sonolab	p.84

CLASSIFIED

For Sale:

Brent Armstrong
Professional Makeup

Conception, Design, Application for all aspects of film. 100 Pembroke St. Kingston, Ontario. (613) 542-5577

CANADIAN FILM AWARDS

1978

The National Film Board of Canada thanks the members of the International Jury of the Canadian Film Awards for the 15 Etrogs they awarded to NFB productions and filmmakers.

Best documentary over 60 minutes
— *The Champions*

Best non-dramatic script

Don Brittain

Best Editing

Ted Remerowski

Steven Keller

Best Sound Re-recording

Michel Descombes

Jean-Pierre Joutel

Best documentary under 60 minutes
— *The Hottest Show on Earth*

Film makers

Derek Lamb

Wolf Koenig

Terry McCartney-Filgate

Best Animated Film
— *Afterlife*

Film maker

Ishu Patel

Best Theatrical Short
— *L'Affaire Bronswik*

Film makers

André Leduc

Robert Awad

— *Song of the Paddle*

Best Direction

Bill Mason

Best Sound Editing

John Knight

Ken Page

Best Cinematography (Tie)

Ken Buck

— *L'Âge de la machine*

Best Screenplay

Gilles Carle

Best Supporting Actor

Willy Lamothe

Best Sound Recording

Serge Beauchemin

Best Cinematography (Tie)

Pierre Letarte

Best Art Direction

Jocelyn Joly

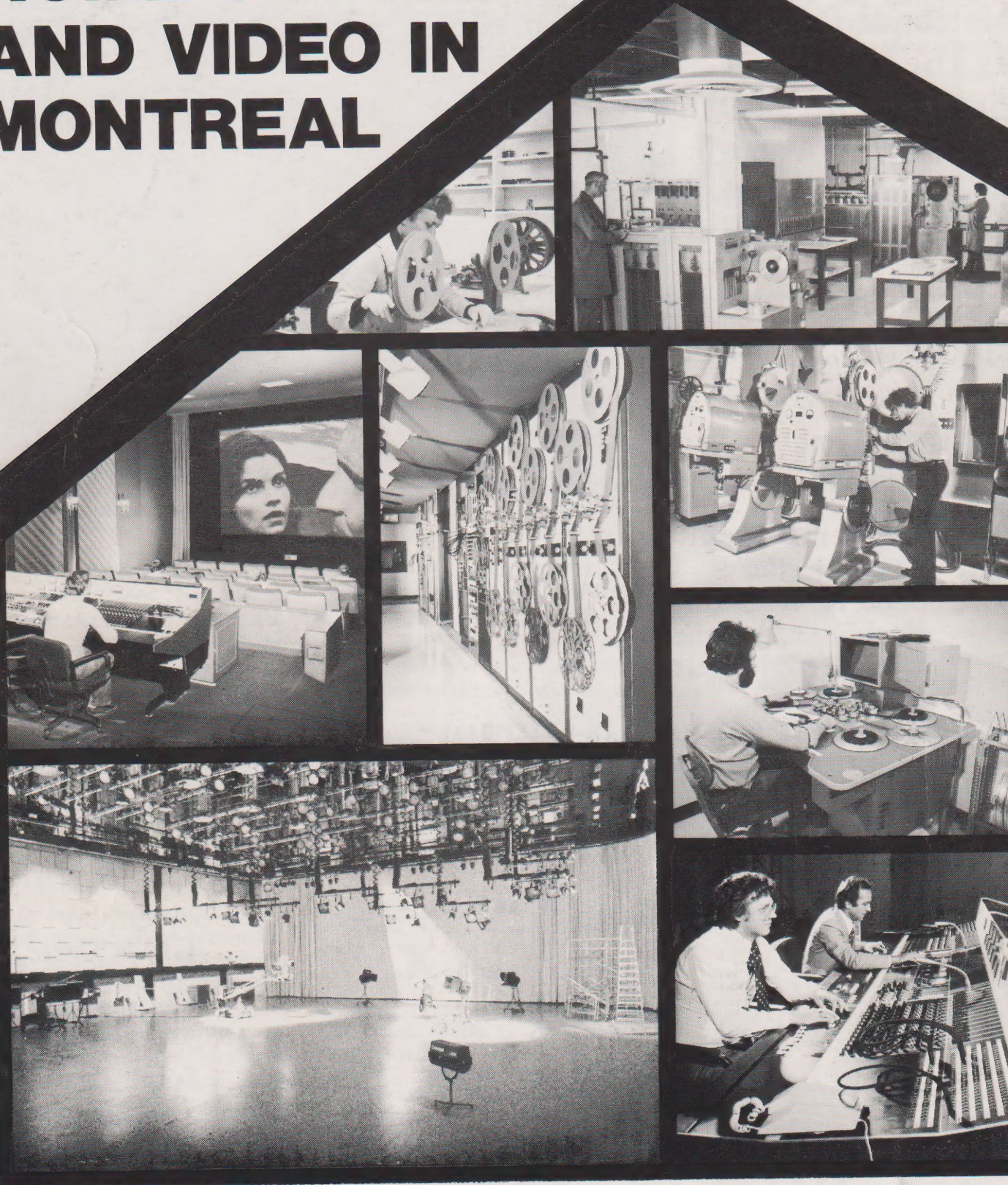


National
Film Board
of Canada

Office
national du film
du Canada

Sonolab and Tele-Metropole

HOME OF FILM AND VIDEO IN MONTREAL



Our technical facilities are one of a kind in Montreal, and rank among the world's finest. Shooting stages, recording studios, screening, editing, video recording, dubbing and language adaptations. It's all here and more.

For modern, high-quality audio-visual productions and service, SONOLAB gets top billing. Great producers have already made use of the many services we have to offer. What about you?

Consider Montreal. Consider SONOLAB . . . superstar of the Canadian film industry.

sonolab INC.
FROM SCRIPT TO SCREEN

1500 Papineau Street.
MONTREAL, QUEBEC, CANADA, H2K 4L9

TELEPHONE (514) 527-8671

TELEX 05-267-329